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TALES FROM SHAKSPEARE.
By CHARLES and MARY LAMB.
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THE MERRY WIVES OF WATSON

THE MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR.

TALES FROM SHAKSPEARE

By HARRISON S. MORRIS

ILLUSTRATED

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PREFACE.

NOTHING could better testify to the perennial charm of Charles and Mary Lamb's Tales from Shakspeare than the fact that during the eighty-six years between the issue of the first edition in 1807 and the present time there have been put forth more than fifty editions, and that each year brings a new contribution to the store.

In their sincere and simple preface the brother and sister, now grown so famous, said that their chief aim was to provide an introduction to the study of Shakspeare for the young reader; but this purpose was carried out by them with such delicate art and critical insight that the group of plays intended for children have become the treasured resource of students, as well as an elevated pleasure for readers to whom books are an enjoyment pure and simple.

Owing perhaps to the wishes of their publisher, who desired to include an equal and limited number of plays in each of the small original volumes, or from some other practical difficulty, or as a matter of personal taste, Charles and Mary Lamb treated only twenty of the thirty-six plays of Shak-

speare, leaving sixteen others which have not until the present time been rendered into prose.

While of a necessity these sixteen additional plays, included in the present volume, must come into comparison with the inimitable tales of Elia and his gifted sister, yet the writer trusts that his purpose may not be misapprehended ; and he asks to be freed from the charge of inviting such a contrast, or of deeming his imperfect continuation as in any wise worthy of a place beside the versions made by Charles and Mary Lamb. Far from desiring to put himself in so unenviable a light, he hastens to forestall such an inference by avowing that the aim with which the continuation has been made is the same which inspired the first project,—a wish to provide the means for readers, old and young, to gain a knowledge of Shakspeare while from lack of time or training they are not able to find their way through the "wild poetic garden" for themselves. Coupled with this was the desire to supplement the uncompleted work, not with tales the equal of the originals in grace, wisdom, or critical penetration, but with such as at least might be accepted as a help to that part of Shakspeare, and no unimportant part it is, left untouched by the earlier authors.

In undertaking such a task, the veneration felt for the well-loved brother and sister—and perhaps a sense of the humour of the situation, which none would have relished more quickly than they —was not the only deterring influence. With their

wise foresight and sense of the fitness of things, having twenty plays of Shakspeare to abridge, they chose those in all respects adapted to their purpose, and omitted just such examples as were most difficult to turn into intelligible prose versions. Says Canon Ainger, the best and most sympathetic editor of Lamb, "The whole series of English histories is left unattempted, as well as the Roman plays; and of the few that remain, 'Love's Labour's Lost' is the only one the reason for whose omission is not quite obvious."

This, then, will serve to show under what difficulties the additional tales, forming the present volume, have been turned into prose. To bring Falstaff, the chartered libertine of Elizabethan slang, into juvenile phrase; to weave the broken dramatic scenes of the Wars of the Roses into even-pacing narrative; and to conquer the heroic periods of the unconquerable Romans, is a task beset with difficulties; and if the adventurer in this untried field has succeeded so far as to make acceptable reductions of these immortal dramas, he has but to reckon with the shades of Elia and of Bridget Elia, and with the mightier phantom of Shakspeare, to whose benign mercies he trusts his readers will consent to leave him.

H. S. M.

PHILADELPHIA, 1892.

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LOVE'S LABOUR'S LOST.

IT was the pleasant whim of the king of Navarre and his friends, the Lords Biron, Longaville, and Dumain, to vow one day that they would devote themselves to study for three years and see no woman during all that time. Their court, said the king, should be a little Academe, and Navarre the wonder of the world, for they would war against their affections and desires and live a contemplative life.

When the time came for subscribing their names to this agreement, Longaville and Dumain were ready to do it without delay; but Biron held out, being of a gallant nature and loving the company of ladies, as secretly did all the rest, and was for argument and amendment of the plan. He was willing, he said, to live secluded and study for three years; but there were other strict observances, such as not to see a woman during that term; not to touch food on one day in each week; to take but one meal every day, and to sleep only three hours in the night, yet not be seen to wink through the morning. These things

he said he wished might not be enrolled in the bond, for they were barren tasks and too hard to keep.

The king made answer that Biron's oath was already passed, but the reluctant lord replied that he had sworn to no conditions, saving only to study and stay three years in the court.

Then the others in chorus vowed that he had sworn to all the conditions, but he held that it was only in jest. "What, after all, is the end of study?" asked Biron. "To know that which else you should not know," answered the king.

At this the gay Lord Biron turned the subject, which was growing serious, with a jest, and said he would study, then, the things he was forbidden to know, as where he might dine well when he was expressly bidden to fast; or where to meet some lady when he was denied her company; or, having sworn to a crabbed oath, study how to break it. "Swear me to this," quoth he, "and I will never say no."

He would not listen to the chiding of the king, but railed on pleasantly, like the merry-hearted gentleman he was. "Study," he said, "is like the heaven's glorious sun, that will not be searched by saucy glances; and, moreover, continual plodders have won little enough from their books saving base authority. The earthly godfathers that give the names to the stars have no more profit from their shining than common folk that do not know what they are. To know too much is to get

nothing but fame, which is cheap enough, since every godfather can give it."

Hereupon the three others began to rally Biron for his show of the very knowledge he mocked at; but he held his own in the passage of wit, and at last the king was forced to cry, "Well, go home, then, Biron, if you will. Adieu!" and was for bowing him out of the compact. But here the true-heartedness of Biron showed itself through his gaiety, for he said, "No, my good lord; I have sworn to stay with you, and, though I have spoken more for barbarism than you can say for the angel knowledge, yet I'll keep my oath and bide the penance." He took the paper and began to read it aloud:

"Item, That no woman shall come within a mile of my court, on pain of losing her tongue.

"Item, If any man be seen to walk with a woman within the term of three years he shall endure such public shame as the rest of the court shall possibly devise."

Here, looking up, Biron said to the king, "My liege, you must break this article yourself, for well you know that the French king's daughter comes here in embassy to speak with you about the surrender of Aquitain to her bed-ridden father."

Biron now enjoyed a merry triumph, for the king was in dismay. The visit of the princess had been forgotten, but her mission was of too much importance to be put aside. The king was for dispensing with his decree and entertaining her

within his court on the plea of necessity; but Biron took advantage of his weakness, quickly signed the bond, and proclaimed, mockingly, that if he were ever forsworn it would be purely from necessity.

While all this was happening the princess approached the court of Navarre and sent forward her courtier, Boyet, to tell the king of her arrival. She had in her train, besides this gallant gentleman, the ladies Rosaline, Maria, and Katharine, —all light of heart and nimble of wit,—and with these and the other lords of her household she gossiped of the king of Navarre and his friends until Boyet's return. He came back presently with the information that the king had received notice of her approach and was well addressed to meet her, but that he meant to lodge her in the fields rather than seek a dispensation of his oath.

As Boyet was telling this to his mistress, the king drew near and welcomed her warmly to his court of Navarre. She haughtily gave him back his fair words, and, as for welcome, she said she had yet found none, for the roof of the court of open air under which they stood was too high to be his, and welcome to the wide fields too base to be hers. This twinged the king shrewdly, and he hastened to offer her welcome to his proper court; upon which she asked him to conduct her thither. Then he told her of his oath, which she pretended to be ignorant of, and she fell to rallying him and was much vexed, asking that he suddenly give his decision in her suit and let her go.

While the king was reading the paper which the princess now gave him, his friends mingled with the ladies, and each found his match in wit; but when Navarre had finished the paper, he hushed their banter by some grave words to the princess. "Madam," he said, "your father here intimates the payment of a hundred thousand crowns, which is but the one-half of an entire sum disbursed by my father in his wars. But say that we have received that amount, though we have not, there yet remains unpaid another hundred thousand, in surety of which one part of Aquitain is bound to us, although it is not valued at the money's worth. If, then, your father, the king, will restore a half of what is unsatisfied, we will give up our right in Aquitain, and hold fair friendship with him. But it seems he does not purpose even this, for here he demands to have a hundred thousand pounds repaid, and to leave Aquitain in our possession, which we had much rather give up and have back the money lent by our father."

Following this, the king said some courtly words to the princess; but she resented his words about her father and insisted that the sum he demanded had been paid. This Navarre professed never to have heard of, but he said if she could prove it he would pay it back or yield up Aquitain.

The princess quickly took him at his word and appealed to Boyet to produce acquittances from the king's father for such a sum. Boyet told her that the package wherein that and other specialties

were bound had not come, but that to-morrow she should have a sight of it. Hereupon the king said he would wait, and in the mean time offered such welcome as he could, without breach of honour, tender to her. "You may not come within my gates, fair princess," said he, "but here without you shall be so received as you shall deem yourself lodged in my heart." Then the king and his attendants bade the ladies farewell and parted for the court, but not without a passage of wit between the ladies attendant on the princess and the gay courtiers of Navarre.

Now, there was one other who had taken the king's oath of a three years' studious life. He had been chosen because of his droll and fantastic humours. He was described by the king as a refined traveller from Spain, a man planted in the world's newest fashion, who had a mint of phrases in his brain. He was, in truth, one who was ravished by the music of his own vain tongue. This was Don Adriano de Armado, and he was welcomed into the fellowship of study because, as the king said, he might relate the worth of many a knight from tawny Spain, and thus he with Costard the swain could make them sport when they desired it in their solitude.

It happened that Armado had by the king's command placed Costard in durance because of his unlawful conduct with Jaquenetta, a country wench. But Don Armado, in his turn, had also become enamoured of Jaquenetta and he deter-

mined to employ Costard to bear a letter to her. For this service he gave the swain his liberty and sent him on his way.

Before very long Costard was met by Lord Biron, who also employed him to deliver a sealed-up letter, which he explained was for Rosaline, who might be overtaken when she came to the park to hunt on that afternoon. Costard took his guerdon and went onward, but Biron lingered under the trees and reproached himself,—he that had been love's whip, a very beadle to a humorous sigh, a critic; nay, a night-watch constable; a domineering pedant over Cupid—he to be in love! "What," quoth he, "I love! I sue! I seek a wife! a woman like a German clock, still repairing, ever out of frame, and never going aright! Nay, but to be perjured is worst of all, and among three to love the worst of all!" Then he fell to reviling his lady-love in playful bitterness, but he was past cure, for Cupid had, in very truth, in return for his neglect, imposed a plague which there was no escaping.

At the time appointed by the king, who desired to entertain his guests as best he could while still remaining true to his oath, the princess and her retinue were led abroad by one of the royal foresters to a hunt in the park; and, as Biron had directed, Costard followed the train and attempted to deliver Biron's letter to the lady Rosaline. He asked the princess, with a loutish bow, which was the head lady; and, as she said she was, he an-

nounced that he had a letter from one Monsieur Biron to one Lady Rosaline. Hereupon the princess demanded the letter, and it was handed to Boyet, who, looking at the superscription, said, "This letter is mistook. It importeth none here. It is writ to Jaquenetta;" for the silly swain had delivered Don Armado's letter instead of Lord Biron's. The princess commanded that the wax be broken; and the Spanish don's letter, full of hard words and bombastic phrases, was read amid peals of laughter.

Then the princess called Costard: "Thou fellow, a word: Who gave thee this letter?" The swain answered that my lord had given it to him, and that it was from my lord to my lady. "From which lord to which lady?" said the princess. "From my lord Biron, a good master of mine, to a lady of France that he called Rosaline." "Thou hast mistaken his letter," said the princess, and she and her train rode gaily away.

Strolling through the park after them came Jaquenetta and Costard, who were overtaken by two men very learned in their own conceit,—namely, Holofernes, a schoolmaster, and Sir Nathaniel, a curate, with whom was Dull, the constable. Jaquenetta interrupted the pompous discourse of these two and asked the parson to be so good as to read her a letter which she held forth to him. It was given her by Costard, she said, and was sent her from Don Armatho, as she miscalled her Spanish suitor.

Sir Nathaniel, urged by Holofernes, began to read the letter aloud, which was really that of Lord Biron to Rosaline. It was in verse, and breathed a great love to that lady, calling her by many endearing names. "But, damosella virgin," asked Holofernes, in his high-flown speech, "was this directed to you?" Jaquenetta answered that it was; but upon looking at the superscription, Holofernes found the true address: "To the snow-white hand of the most beauteous Lady Rosaline," and, turning to Jaquenetta, he bade her go deliver it into the hands of the king, for, seeing that Lord Biron had entered into compact with the king for three years' withdrawal from womankind, it might concern him much. Taking Costard with her, Jaquenetta thereupon hurried away, and the two pedants strolled on in fantastical converse.

After all these were gone, Biron came through the trees with a paper in his hand, much berating himself for having, in self-despite, fallen madly in love. "By the world," he muttered, "I would not care a pin if the other three were in," for this was his only hope of escape from his hard bargain. But at that moment he saw one of his vow-fellows coming forward, also with a paper in his hand. To conceal his own embarrassment, and secretly to learn, at the same time, what had happened to the king, for it was he who approached, Biron climbed into a tree and screened himself among its thick leaves. "Ah, me!" sighed the melancholy king, and Lord Biron, in his high perch,

whispered to himself, with inward satisfaction, "Shot, by Heaven!"

The king then began to read aloud a set of verses made to a lady whose beauty he placed above the sun and moon; but, alas! she would still make him weep. He was about to drop the paper, addressed to the princess, in the hope that she would find it, when he heard a footstep on the grass near to him, and stepped aside with his poem still in his hand.

Just as the king disappeared in the deep shade of the trees, Longaville came through the trunks, reading aloud to himself. Biron above, among the leaves, mocked at them both under his breath and was mightily pleased to find his forlorn hope thus coming true. As Longaville reproached himself for his faithlessness to his fellows, Biron and the king, unknown to each other, interjected their comment between his words, each after his own mood, for the king was sad at the miscarriage of his plan, but Biron, as usual, appeared to take it in a merry spirit.

Longaville now read his verses aloud, which assured the fair lady that in addressing her he did not break his vow to forswear women, as she was a goddess. His vow was earthly, but she was a heavenly love. "What fool," he said, "is not wise enough to lose an oath in order to win a paradise?"

As Longaville finished this plausible piece of logic, and was wondering how he should send the

missive to the lady it celebrated, forward came Dumain, also with a paper in his hand and also in the musing mien of a lover. Longaville stepped hastily aside when he saw his fellow-courtier, and he also in turn became an eaves-dropper. Biron from his perch laughed in his sleeve at them and thought how like it was to the old infant play of "All hid," while he sat in the sky like a demi-god, knowing the secrets of all the wretched fools below him.

Dumain exclaimed, with a great sigh, "O most divine Kate!" and Biron in his glee answered, aside, "O most profound coxcomb!" Dumain continued to call his chosen lady by all sorts of fair names, as is the wont of lovers, and Biron mocked each sentence with some outlandish simile; but the others put in now and then a word of sympathy. At last Dumain began to read the ode he had been intent upon, and all were still, for it was one of the sweetest and archest of love-songs:

"On a day (alack the day!),
Love, whose month is ever May,
Spied a blossom, passing fair,
Playing in the wanton air.
Through the velvet leaves the wind,
All unseen, 'gan passage find;
That the lover, sick to death,
Wish'd himself the heaven's breath.
Air, quoth he, thy cheeks may blow;
Air, would I might triumph so!
But, alack! my hand is sworn
Ne'er to pluck thee from thy thorn.

Vow, alack! for youth unmeet;
Youth so apt to pluck a sweet.
Do not call it sin in me,
That I am forsworn for thee:
Thee for whom Jove would swear
Juno but an Ethiope were;
And deny himself for Jove,
Turning mortal for thy love."

He ended with another sigh made up of satisfaction with his ode, of his hopeless suing, and of his pang for a broken vow; then said he, "I will send this and something else more plain that shall express my true love's ardour. O, would," he exclaimed, "the king, Biron, and Longaville were lovers too!"

Longaville could stand the suspense no longer. He advanced from the shadow of the trees and roundly chided his friend. "Dumain," he said, "your love is uncharitable that wants society in its grief. You may look pale, but I should blush to be overheard and taken napping so."

At this the king stepped out and confronted Longaville, who was as much astonished to have been discovered as Dumain. "Come, sir," said the king to Longaville, "Blush yourself; your case is the same as his, and in chiding him you offend twice." Then he went mercilessly over the words of Longaville's sonnet to Maria, and told at last how he had been closely shrouded in the bushes and had marked the actions of both and blushed for them. "What will Biron say," he continued, "when he hears of these broken pledges? Think

how he will scorn you and spend his wit upon you! How he will triumph, and leap, and laugh at it! I would not have him know so much of me for all the wealth I ever saw!"

Biron now thought it was time to show himself. He descended from the tree where he had been in hiding, and straightway began to reproach the king. "Ah, good my liege, I pray pardon me," said he, with a dutiful bow; "but, good heart, what grace have you thus to reprove these worms for loving, who are yourself more in love than they?" Then Biron, in turn, repeated all the conceits of the king's love-ditty, who was in dismay thus to be found out in the presence of those he had just condemned for committing his very fault.

Biron, knowing the state of his own heart, rejoiced at the opportunity to cover his default by reproving it in the others. He rallied them and gave them good advice by turns. "O, what a scene of foolery," he cried, "of sighs, groans, sorrow, and tears! Where does your grief lie, tell me, good Dumain? Where is your pain, gentle Longaville; and where is my liege's? All about the breast—— A caudle, ho!"

"Your fun is too bitter," said the indignant king; but Biron ran on with laughter and mockery, asking at last, "When did you ever know me to write a thing in rhyme? When did you ever hear me praise a hand, a foot, a face, or an eye?" Yet like all who carry a jest beyond bounds, for none of us are without our faults, Biron's banter

at last brought him to shame. He was about to run away, still shaking his sides with laughter, when some one approached and he stopped an instant to learn who it was.

"God bless the king!" said Jaquenetta, for it was she and Costard, who had come to seek his majesty with Biron's verses, as Holofernes had recommended. Jaquenetta begged that the letter which she handed to the king should be in his presence read, for the parson misdoubted that it was treason. The king gave the paper to Biron and asked him to read it, meanwhile questioning where it had come from. Costard said he had had it from Don Armado, upon which the king noticed that Biron was destroying it. "How now! what are you doing? Why do you tear it?" he asked abruptly. "A toy, my liege, a toy; your grace need not be alarmed," was Biron's evasive reply; but it stood him in little stead, for Longaville had noticed how the paper moved him to passion, and Dumain picked up one of the pieces with Biron's name written upon it. Then Biron fell to cursing Costard, who had been born, he said, to do him shame; and, fairly beaten, he cried, "Guilty, my lord, guilty; I confess, I confess!" "What?" asked the king. "That you three fools lacked me to make up the sum. We are all pick-purses in love, my liege, and deserve to die." Costard hereupon, with scorn for all traitors, passed on with Jaquenetta and left the nobles to their mutual explanations.

Biron and the king vied with one another in praise of their lady-loves until finally all fell to jeering at the choice of Biron, who defended his Rosaline like the gallant lover and wit he was. When they had pleasantly bantered each other thus for a long time, the king and the rest called upon Biron, in recognition of his nimble mind, to prove their loving to be lawful and their faith unbroken. This, in some noble words which showed him to be as deep in thought as he was light in converse, Biron quickly did after a manner which all approved. Then the four lovers ran off to prepare some sport for their mistresses, Biron gaily singing a song as they passed away under the trees.

In the mean time the ladies had assembled in the Park, near the pavilion of the princess, and had read the verses sent them by their ardent wooers. As they stood under the shade, laughing lightly over these, Boyet approached in his gayest mood and asked eagerly for the princess. When she appeared he told her how he had lain down for rest half an hour under the cool shade of a sycamore, and there had overheard the king and his companions plotting to come thither disguised as Russians and make trial of the affections of their chosen mistresses. They had also planned to send forward in advance a pretty knavish page, whom they had well taught what he was to say.

The ladies soon resolved that they would have a counter-device with which to meet the gallants. They straightway masked and changed favors, so

that the king and his courtiers must each choose the wrong partner. They had hardly done this before the king's page came forward through the wood and hailed them as "the richest beauties on the earth." This the ladies resented by turning their backs; but the page, who was quick in answers, made a happy retort, while Biron and the rest, who were behind him, urged him on to repeat the words they had taught him. Rosaline, disguised as the princess, and feigning not to know who these strangers were, asked Boyet to learn what they sought. They replied that they wanted nothing but peace and gentle visitation, upon which Rosaline bade them to be gone. The king told her, supposing her to be her royal mistress, that they had measured many miles for the favour of a dance on the grass with her and her companions; but she would and she would not, and finally they separated into pairs, the king going aside with Rosaline, Biron with the princess, Dumain with Maria, and Longaville with Katharine, each supposing he had found his own choice, and each meeting with a merry defiance, which finally drove them all away.

The ladies fell then to telling what the gallants had said, and the mirth ran high as their mistaken confessions of love were repeated. At last the princess asked what they should do if the lovers returned in their own shapes. Rosaline was for mocking them still by telling them how a band of fools had come there disguised like Russians, and

that the princess and her ladies wondered what they were and to what end they had brought thither their shallow shows and vilely-penned prologue. Just as they had resolved on this course the gallants reappeared in their proper habits, and the ladies whipped into their tents to prepare to receive them anew.

When the princess and her attendants, led by Boyet, came forth to greet her royal guest, the king made her a fair all hail, but she returned a light answer. He told her that he and his companions had come to lead her company to his court; but she appeared to resent his former discourtesy and refused to go with him. He took shame to himself for the coldness of her welcome, and said that he was distressed that she had lived thus in desolation, unseen and unvisited. "Not so, my lord," said the princess. "We have had pastimes and pleasant games. A mess of Russians left us but now." "How, madam? Russians?" said the king. "Yes, in truth, my lord. Trim gallants, full of state and courtship." Hereupon Rosaline spoke up. "It is not so, my lord," said she. "We four were indeed confronted by four men in Russian habit, who stayed here an hour, and talked apace, but in the whole hour they did not bless us with a single happy word. I dare not call them fools; but I will say that, when they are thirsty, fools would fain have a drink."

Thus rallying Navarre and his courtiers, the

ladies brought them at last to a confession of their trick; but even then the gallants were ignorant of the deception that had previously been played upon them. When the king vowed that he had whispered a pledge of love into his lady's ear, the princess charged that if she should challenge him with this he would reject her. "Upon my honour, no!" said he, warmly. "Forbear," cried the princess. "You have broken your oath once!" "Despise me, then," said he, "when I break this oath." "I will: therefore you must keep it. Rosaline, what did the Russian whisper in your ear?"

Rosaline repeated the king's oath made to her when in disguise as the princess, and the princess feigned to take the king at his word and joyfully gave him Rosaline's hand. Navarre was vexed and put out of countenance by this, and only after a free explanation of the pleasant device of the ladies could he and his companions understand how they had been caught in a trap laid by themselves.

But Costard came in at this moment to announce a mummery which he and his companions had planned for the entertainment of the princess, and the embarrassment of the gallants was soon lost in the fun of the play. When this mock drama was about to end in a real combat between Costard and Armado, arrived a messenger from France to the princess, named Mercade, who brought tidings of her old father's death. Upon this news the

company quickly dispersed, and the princess, in her sudden sorrow, gave orders for her departure on that same night. She thanked the king and his companions for all their fair endeavours, and entreated them to excuse the liberties she and her companions had appeared to take. If they had borne themselves over-boldly, the king's gentleness was guilty of it. "Farewell, worthy lord!" said she. "A heavy heart does not bear a humble tongue. Excuse me for coming so short of thanks for my great suit so easily obtained."

But the king would not be put off. He was truly in love with the princess, and even her great grief could not prevent him from urging his suit. "Since love's argument was on foot first," said he, "do not let sorrow justle it from its purpose. To wail for lost friends is not so wholesome as to rejoice at friends newly found."

The princess still feigned to misunderstand his declaration of love, so he spoke in honest, plain words which should best pierce the ears of grief. He told the ladies how, for their sakes, he and his gentlemen had neglected time, and played foul with their oaths. How beauty had deformed them, drawn them aside from their intents, and made them appear ridiculous, for love is wanton as a child, skipping, and vain, and formed by the eye, like which, it is full of stray shapes varying in subjects as the eye rolls to every varied object.

The princess replied that they had received the

letters of the king and his companions, with all their favours and messages of love; but had rated them as pleasant jests to while away the time, not as serious professions.

The king then made one last appeal that their vows might be accepted in very truth, but still the princess held out. The time was too short, she said, to make a world-without-end bargain in. Yet there was one condition on which she might at length accept his wooing. Still rallying him for his foolish pledge of retirement which he had so quickly broken, she said she would not accept his oath; but if he would go with speed to some forlorn and naked hermitage remote from the pleasures of the world, and stay there a year, then, if that austere and unsociable life should not change the state of his heart and make him regret an offer made in heat of blood, he might come and claim her hand, by the virgin palm of which, now held against his, she swore to be his wife. Until then she would shut herself up in a house of mourning and shed endless tears for the death of the old king, her father.

When Navarre had dutifully accepted these hard conditions, and said some ardent words of adieu, Biron, Dumain, and Longaville asked each in turn of his chosen lady what was to be his fate, and each had for answer that he must come a-wooing at the end of a twelvemonth and a day, when the king came to the princess. Then Biron, in the excess of his ardour, asked Rosaline to impose

some service on him that might fitly show his love.

"I have often heard of you, my Lord Biron," returned Rosaline, who had a store of light wit, but who had withal much womanly wisdom and loved seriousness none the less. "The world's large tongue proclaims you to be a man full of mockeries and wounding jests. If, then, you would win me, and at the same time weed this wormwood from your brain, you must, for a twelvemonth to come, visit the sick from day to day and converse with groaning wretches, your task being to force them to smile at your witty sallies." "But what jest could move laughter in the throat of death?" asked Biron, in dismay. "It is impossible. Mirth cannot move a soul that is in agony." He was beginning thus to realize how small a part of life lies in laughter, which to him had hitherto been the all in all.

"Why," said Rosaline, not a little pleased to find him so easily schooled, "that is the way to choke a gibing spirit whose influence is begotten of the grace that shallow hearers give to fools. A jest's prosperity lies in the ear of the hearer, never in the tongue of the maker. So, if ears that are deaf with the noise of their own groans will listen to your idle mockeries, continue them, and I will have you and the fault together. But if they will not, throw away that spirit, and I will be right joyful at your reformation."

Biron was too deep in love to resist any condi-

tion that Rosaline might impose upon him. He gladly accepted her terms, and said he would, whatever befell, jest for the year long in a hospital.

Then the princess turned to depart, but the king offered to take her on her way, while Biron, jester to the last, remarked that their wooing had not ended like an old play. "Jack has not got Jill," quoth he. "The courtesy of these ladies might well have made our sport a comedy." "Come, sir," said the king, "it wants but a twelvemonth and it will end." "But that's too long for a play," ruefully said Biron.

Here broke in Don Armado, desiring to kiss the royal finger and crying that he had vowed to Jaquenetta to hold the plough three years for her sweet love. "But, most esteemed greatness," pleaded he, "will you hear the dialogue that the two learned men, Holofernes and Sir Nathaniel, have made in praise of the owl and the cuckoo?" The king bade him call them forth quickly, and out stepped the two pedants with Moth and Costard, whereupon Ver, the Spring, sang a song of the cuckoo, and Hiems, or Winter, this ditty of the owl:

"When icicles hang by the wall,
And Dick the shepherd blows his nail,
And Tom bears logs into the hall,
And milk comes frozen home in pail,
When blood is nipp'd, and ways be foul,
Then nightly sings the staring owl,
To-who;
To-whit, to-who, a merry note,
While greasy Joan doth keel the pot.

"When all aloud the wind doth blow,
And coughing drowns the parson's saw,
And birds sit brooding in the snow,
And Marian's nose looks red and raw;
When roasted crabs hiss in the bowl,
Then nightly sings the staring owl,
To-who;
To-whit, to-who, a merry note,
While greasy Joan doth keel the pot."

MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR.

IN the pleasant town of Windsor lived Master Page and his wife, with their daughter Mistress Anne Page, who was both young and comely. It was plain that Mistress Anne had inherited her good looks from her mother, for Mrs. Page was, in spite of her matronhood, still winning enough to beget an elderly passion in Sir John Falstaff.

This knight was a freebooter of the town, who lived upon his wits and was followed by a band of cut-purses and knaves who throve on his remnant of respectability. He was fat, and unwieldy of gait, and his face was crimsoned by the potations of sack he was forever draining in Mine Host's tap-room of the Garter Inn, in which public-house he dwelt.

But Sir John's happy-go-lucky calling was not prosperous. His fellows were idle, and a great charge upon him, for they cost him ten pounds a week in wages, and his pockets were empty. He decided to turn some of them away; but this was not relished by those who were discharged. They were used to the careless life of dependents, and

liked little to have to shift for themselves. Bardolph, a withered serving-man, as his master called him, was engaged by the host of the Garter as a tapster; and Sir John was heartily glad to be rid of him, for his thefts were too open; but Nym and Pistol found no honest employment, nor indeed did they want any, but preferred to take to the road as highwaymen on their own account.

Sir John now determined to make his susceptible heart do service to his empty purse. He had conceived a sudden love for the wife of one Master Ford, who was a neighbour of Master Page, and this new fancy he thought he could make of twofold benefit. Ford was a man well-to-do, and Mistress Ford had, quoth Sir John, the command of her husband's purse. He therefore wrote a gallant letter to her, as a final means of restoring his fortunes. In the wide reach of his affections he had also, as was before said, conceived a passion for the elder Mistress Page, and he now wrote her a love-letter as well. He asked Nym and Pistol, as they waited upon him in the tap-room of the Garter, each to deliver one of the letters to the lady addressed. This they disdainfully refused to do, both because of assumed honour, and because they knew that Falstaff meant soon to cast them off. Sir John, therefore, gave the letters to his page, Robin, and directed him to carry them to Mistress Ford and Mistress Page.

When Falstaff and Robin had gone out, Pistol began to curse the knight, and Nym swore to be

revenged. "I will incense Ford to deal with poison," said he. "I will possess him with yellowness," meaning jealousy. "Thou art the Mars of malcontents!" cried Pistol, and he in turn vowed to do the like by Page.

When Mistress Page received her letter she was much puzzled to remember what behaviour on her part had encouraged the amorous knight to think that she might return his sudden affections. As she was reading the letter once again in front of her house, and vowing to be revenged upon him for his impudence, Mistress Ford overtook her and asked her for some counsel, saying that were it not for one trifling respect she could come to much honour. "Hang the trifle, woman," said Mistress Page; "take the honour. What is it? dispense with trifles: what is it?" "If I would but consent to be lost for an eternal moment or so I could be knighted," answered Mistress Ford. Then she showed the letter from Sir John which she had just received, and implored Mistress Page to advise her how to be revenged upon the rascal adventurer. When she saw the letter, Mistress Page was even more angry than before, because it was word for word like her own. "I warrant he hath a thousand of these letters writ with blank space for different names," said she, "and these are of the second edition."

The honest wives then planned a merry revenge upon the old knight, which should cure him forever of his lying flatteries and clumsy deceits.

"Let us appoint him a meeting," said they; "give him a show of comfort in his suit, and lead him on with a fine baited delay till he hath pawned his horses to Mine Host of the Garter." "Nay," quoth Mistress Ford, "I will consent to any act of villany against him that may not sully the chariness of our honesty; but if my husband saw this letter it would give eternal food to his jealousy."

Thus these good wives, feeling themselves injured in their reputations by the knight's presumption, and being the hearty dames of old England they were, set about a revenge which should show them some sport such as they loved, and at the same time punish the offender.

But as Mistress Page and Mistress Ford were about to go indoors, their husbands, accompanied by Pistol and Nym, came up, in earnest talk, for Pistol in the mean time had assured Mr. Ford that Sir John affected his wife, and, though Ford endeavoured to conceal his anxiety at the news, yet it was evident that he was violently suspicious. Page, who had heard the same news about Mistress Page from Nym, was in no wise disturbed, but rather chose to believe in his wife than in so notable a rogue.

Ford had brooded jealously over the possibility of his wife's love for Falstaff, and would not be satisfied until he had put her truth to a test. He went, therefore, to Mine Host of the Garter, and, pretending some merriment, offered him a pottle

of burnt sack if he would give him admittance to Falstaff under the false name of Brook. It was, he said, only for a jest; and this quite fell in with Mine Host's mood, who was always eager for sport of any kind.

While Ford was putting on his disguise and preparing to visit Sir John, the knight received a call from Mistress Quickly, an elderly woman who was servant to Dr. Caius, the French physician of Windsor. She was a notable gossip and just the person to help Mistress Ford and Mistress Page in their plan of revenge. They had chosen her for her wit, which concealed a store of deceit beneath a show of humble ignorance. She came in to Sir John as he was chiding his surly follower Pistol, and, though she gave warning that her errand was secret, Falstaff, who was not a little guileless for all his bravado and boastfulness, assured her that nobody heard, saving his own people. "Heaven bless them and make them his servants," exclaimed Mistress Quickly, and then falteringly delivered her message.

It was from Mistress Ford, who, said the good dame, was much courted by the best nobility of the realm, yet heeded them not, but gave willing ear to Sir John's tender messages. He could come to her, she notified him, between ten and eleven o'clock, when her husband would be absent from home. "Alas! the sweet woman leads an ill life with him," exclaimed Mistress Quickly; "he's a very jealousy man; she leads a very fretful

life with him, good heart." "Ten and eleven," mused Sir John, entirely deceived. "Woman, commend me to her; I will not fail her." "Why, you say well," answered the good dame; "but I have another message to your worship." Then she told him how Mistress Page had also sent him her hearty commendations. "And let me tell you in your ear," continued she, "she is as virtuous a civil modest wife as any is in Windsor, yet I never knew a woman so dote upon a man; surely, I think you have charms, la; yes, in truth."

Thus wheedling and flattering, Mistress Quickly coaxed the knight into the trap laid for him by the good wives, and when he had, in the excess of his delight, given her his purse and sent with her his page Robin to be a messenger between himself and Mistress Page, Dame Quickly retired and left him to his joy at having made so profitable a conquest.

While he was in the midst of his exclamations of delight, Bardolph entered his chamber with the news that one Master Brook was below and would fain speak with him. He then handed Sir John a draught of sack from the visitor. This was a bond of good-fellowship which the knight could never resist, so he commanded that Master Brook be called in. "Such Brooks are welcome to me, that overflow with liquor," said he, and, as Bardolph hastened out to bring the guest, again the old knight fell into a cry of delight at having won Mistress Ford and Mistress Page to accept his suit.

Mr. Ford, disguised as Mr. Brook, now followed Bardolph into Falstaff's chamber, and when the tapster had retired they fell at once to talk of Mr. Brook's business. He had come, he said, about a gentlewoman of the town whose name was Ford. "I have long loved her," he frankly confessed (which was probable enough, seeing she was his own wife), "and, I protest to you, bestowed much upon her. But whatever I have merited, either in my mind or in my means, I have received no recompense except bitter experience." Then Mr. Brook enlarged on his grievances and frankly avowed his purpose, which was that Sir John should lay an amiable siege to the honesty of Ford's wife. "Use your art of wooing, win her to consent to you; if any man may, you may as soon as any." Thus appealing to the vanity of the aged gallant, and giving him money which he urged him to spend freely in the attempt, Ford, in the person of Brook, hoped to test the faith of his wife, for he thought, as a warrant for his wish to undo her, that if he could come to her with any detection in his hand, his desires would have instance and argument to commend them.

Falstaff first carefully secured the money, and next gave Brook his hand in witness of the bargain; lastly, he assured him that he should, if he would, have his wish. Brook was not a little shaken by this promise, and almost betrayed himself at the thought of his own shame, which he was thus bargaining for; but he was a determined man

and very jealous, and he persisted in his cruel device.

Falstaff then assured Brook that, by appointment, he would be with Ford's wife between ten and eleven: "for at that time," said he, "the jealous rascally knave, her husband, will be forth. Come you to me to-night; you shall know how I speed." They then parted, and Ford resolved to overtake Sir John with his wife in his own house, between ten and eleven o'clock that same day.

Now, it happened that a certain Dr. Caius and Sir Hugh Evans had challenged each other to a duel which had been caused by their rivalry in wooing Anne Page, of whom each was a lover. That day they had gone forth in the fields beyond Windsor to meet in deadly combat with the sword. Mine Host, with Master Page, Shallow, a country justice, and Slender, another suitor of Anne Page, had heard of this, and had gone out to see the sport, which, as was well foreseen, ended in a mere torrent of words, for Mine Host took care that they kept their limbs whole and hacked nothing but the English tongue.

As all these came back to town they met Master Ford on his way to expose the villany of Falstaff, and were invited by him to his house, where he said he had much good cheer to regale them with, and, for their further entertainment, he would show them a monster.

Shallow and Slender and Mine Host excused

themselves from going, as they had other engagements; but the rest were bent upon any madness, and crying, "Have with you to see the monster," started gaily off under Ford's guidance.

While all this was taking place, Mrs. Ford and Mrs. Page had been preparing to receive Falstaff. They had directed the servants to bring into the room where Sir John was to visit Mrs. Ford, a great basket used for carrying soiled linen out to the laundry in Datchet meadow by the Thames River side. When this had been done, Mrs. Ford charged the men to stand ready hard by in the brew-house, and, when she suddenly called them, to come forth and, without any pause or staggering, to take the basket on their shoulders, carry it to the laundry, and empty it into the muddy ditch by the river. As the men retired, Falstaff's page, little Robin, appeared with the news that his master was at the back door and requested Mrs. Ford's company.

Mrs. Page put up a warning finger and asked if the boy had been true to her. "Ay, I'll be sworn," said he; "my master knows not of your being here, and hath threatened to put me into everlasting liberty if I tell you of it." "Thou'rt a good boy!" said she, and ran away to hide from Sir John; whereupon Mrs. Ford called after her to remember her cue; and then told the page to go say to his master that she was alone.

Falstaff came puffing in anon, protesting his love for Mrs. Ford in a medley of words which

she feigned well to believe, and vowing he wished that her husband were dead, for he would thus make her his own lady. He heaped a score of clumsy compliments on her beauty, and when she modestly protested he asked, "What made me love thee? Let that persuade thee there's something extraordinary in thee." As he was in the midst of his tender speeches, the page cried from within: "Mistress Ford, Mistress Ford! here's Mistress Page at the door, sweating and blowing, and looking wildly, and would needs speak with you presently." Falstaff was dismayed at this news. He ran and ensconced himself behind the arras which hung against the walls, just as Mrs. Page entered the room, crying, "O Mistress Ford, what have you done? You're shamed, you're overthrown, you're undone forever." Mistress Page pretended, for the benefit of Sir John in hiding, to be very much agitated, but, to cap the climax, Mrs. Page told her that her husband was coming thither with all the officers of Windsor, to search for a gentleman that was now there in his house by his wife's consent. Mrs. Ford denied it with what show of gravity she could, and Mrs. Page went on to harrow the feelings of the knight by imploring her, if there were one hidden there, to convey him out at all hazards. Then Mrs. Ford made pretence of confiding in her friend and openly confessed her fault. She said there was a gentleman concealed in the arras, and she feared not her own shame so much as his peril. "I had

rather than a thousand pound he were out of the house,'' cried she, in apparent despair.

''For shame; never stand saying, 'you had rather,'" replied Mrs. Page; ''your husband's here at hand; bethink you of some conveyance; you cannot hide him in the house. Look, here is a basket; if he be of any reasonable stature he may creep in here; and throw foul linen upon him.''

Falstaff now appeared from behind the hangings in a great fright, and begged them to let him see the basket. As he squeezed his huge bulk in, Mrs. Page scornfully cried, ''What! Sir John Falstaff! Are these your letters!'' But he did not heed her, pleading only to be taken away.

The two dames and the page then piled in the soiled linen on top of the perspiring knight, and Mistress Ford called to her men to bear him out, giving them careful directions anew where the clothes should be taken.

At this moment Master Ford and his companions arrived at the door. He had been telling them his suspicions on the way, but they treated the tale as a jest. As they entered, the huge basket containing the redoubtable Flemish knight was brought forth. Ford stopped and asked the servants sharply whither they were bearing it, and was told, ''To the laundress, forsooth.'' Mrs. Ford then spoke up. ''You were best meddle with the buck-washing,'' said she, and thus, while Ford went on lamenting over his troubles, the

fancied source of them was carried away in the wash-basket under his very eyes.

After all the company had gone into the house, Ford gave them his keys, bidding them ascend to his chambers and seek out whoever was hidden there. Page pleaded with him to be content, and not to shame his wife; but he persisted, and carried all his visitors up to see Falstaff exposed. In the mean time Mrs. Page and Mrs. Ford were with suppressed laughter enjoying the joke below, and wondering which pleased them most, the discomfiture of Sir John or of Mr. Ford. But Mrs. Ford had divined that her husband shrewdly suspicioned Falstaff's presence there, and this not a little alarmed her. Mrs. Page said she would lay a plot to try that, and they might thus have still more tricks with the amorous knight. They resolved to send Mistress Quickly to him with apologies for throwing him in the water, and to give him another hope, only to betray him to another punishment. He was to be sent for on the morrow at eight o'clock, that they might feign to make him amends.

Ford and his companions came down disappointed of their prey. Page reproached his neighbour for his false suspicions, saying he would not have a distemper of this kind for the wealth of Windsor Castle, and well he might feel so, for a jealous man breeds himself an endless torment, and does untold harm to his kind. Ford now affected to cast off his gloomy humours, and in-

vited all the company in to the dinner which he had promised them, including Mrs. Page and his wife. They went in to share the repast, but nevertheless were resolved to make game of their host when the chance came. Before they drew up to the table, Page asked them to come to his house to breakfast in the morning, and after, to go a-birding, for he had a fine hawk for the bush. They were in for any sport, said they, and would right gladly, whereupon they sat about the board and fell to with appetite upon Ford's plentiful viands.

Falstaff was in a great temper the next morning, and called for his sack to have a toast in it, that he should be warmed after his bath in the Thames, for his belly was as cold, said he, as if he had swallowed snowballs for pills. He vowed that if ever he were served such another trick he would have his brains taken out and buttered to give to some dog for a new year's gift. "The rogues," growled he to Bardolph, "tilted me into the river with as little remorse as they would have drowned a litter of puppies, and you may know by my size that I have a kind of alacrity in sinking. I should have drowned but that the shore was shelvy and shallow,—a death that I abhor."

As he was railing on thus, Mistress Quickly arrived, saying she had come from Mrs. Ford. "I have had ford enough: I was thrown into the ford," said Falstaff, angrily. The good dame pleaded that it was not her mistress's fault. She

was in great grief over it. The men, she said, mistook the direction. Then she gave him her message, which was that Mrs. Ford's husband went that day a-birding, and she desired him to come to her between eight and nine. "I must carry her an answer quickly," quoth she. "She'll make amends, I warrant you."

The knight could not resist such a flattering appeal. His vanity was touched, and he saw, too, in the achievement of his designs a remedy for his empty purse. Hence he said he would go. "And bid her think what a man is," he added; "let her consider his frailty, and then judge of my merit."

As Quickly went out, Brook came in with a "Bless you, sir!" He had come to learn what had passed between Sir John and Mrs. Ford, and the knight was not a little chagrined to have to tell him of his ill success—not to speak of the scandalous treatment he had received. But he laid all the blame on Ford's jealousy, and vowed he would be thrown into Ætna, as he had been thrown into Thames, before he would leave her thus. He then revealed to Mr. Brook that, as Mr. Ford had that morning gone a-birding, he had received another embassy of meeting from Mrs. Ford, between eight and nine; and bid Brook come to him at his convenient leisure to know how he sped.

The knight then went out to keep his appointment, and Ford, in the disguise of Brook, was dis-

mayed by the unexpected turn of affairs. He did not quite know whether he was asleep or awake. But he felt that he must overcome his astonishment and act promptly. Falstaff was even then on the way to his house, and he decided to go at once and take him in his villany.

As Ford, accompanied by Master Page, Shallow, Dr. Caius, and Sir Hugh Evans, came up to the doorway of his house, Mrs. Ford, to tease him and to throw him off his guard, had the clothes-basket again carried out, which seeing, Ford raved against his wife and demanded to look into it. In the mean while Mrs. Page led forth a fat old woman whom she called mother Pratt. This was the aunt of Mrs. Ford's maid, and she lived in Brentford. Ford had a great hatred of her and had forbid her his house, and now, in the excess of his anger at not finding Falstaff where he had expected him to be, he beat the old woman unmercifully from his door, calling her witch, and hag, and baggage, and many more unsavory names. Mrs. Page reproached him for his cruelty. "Are you not ashamed?" said she; "I think you have killed the poor woman." But Ford only muttered the more curses after her; and when she had hurried her unwieldy body, in ill-fitting clothes with a muffler about her head, out of the way, he prayed his companions to follow him up-stairs and discover the hidden rogue.

As they went up, Mrs. Ford and Mrs. Page gave vent anew to their glee at this happy de-

vice for punishing the rascally old knight. He had come according to appointment, and again Mrs. Page had brought the news of Mr. Ford's approach. Then Sir John in craven fear had looked everywhere for a refuge, and had finally consented to put on the clothes of the old witch of Brentford, which happened to be up-stairs. Thus ingloriously disguised, he had taken a sound beating at the hands of the man he meant to wrong, and had retreated in cowardly haste.

Mrs. Page said she would have the cudgel hallowed and hung over the altar, so pleased was she that the culprit had got his deserts. "What think you?" said Mrs. Ford. "May we, with warrant of womanhood and the witness of a good conscience, pursue him with any further revenge?" Mrs. Page thought that the spirit of wantonness was surely scared out of him; but she agreed that they should tell their husbands, and if Ford and Page desired to afflict him any further, it would be well.

Ford was very contrite when he heard his wife's confession. He humbly asked her pardon, and vowed he would henceforth rather suspect the sun with cold than her with any wantonness. Then he and Page agreed that the good dames should make public sport with the old fat fellow once again, so that he might be taken in the act and disgraced for his offences.

It was planned that the merry wives should meet Sir John by appointment in the park at mid-

night. There was an old tale of Herne the hunter, who had been a keeper once in Windsor forest, and who, through all the winter time, at midnight, walked round about an oak, with great ragged horns, blasting the trees and taking the cattle, and shaking a chain in a most hideous and dreadful manner. Travellers feared mightily to walk at night by Herne's oak, as it was called, and thus after sundown it was a deserted place. This was the spot fixed upon for the meeting, and it was agreed that Falstaff should be asked to come thither dressed with huge horns on his head, like Herne the hunter.

"Then," quoth Mrs. Page, "my daughter and my little son and three or four more of their growth shall be dressed like urchins, ouphes, and fairies in green and white, and shall carry lighted tapers on their heads and rattles in their hands; and when Falstaff, Mrs. Ford, and I are newly met they shall come forth suddenly with some song. We two will feign cowardice and fly, while they shall encircle him about and pinch him, fairy-like, asking why he dares to profane their sacred paths at that hallowed hour."

This being arranged, the plotters parted, Ford promising to go once again to the knight disguised as Brook and learn all his purpose, after Dame Quickly had invited him to the midnight meeting.

When Mistress Quickly, bent upon this mission, reached the Garter Inn, Sir John was in the tap-

room lamenting very bitterly over the cudgelling he had received from Ford. "If it should come to the ear of the court," growled he, "how I had been transformed, they would melt me out of my fat, drop by drop, and liquor fishermen's boots with me. I warrant they would whip me with their fine wits till I were as crest-fallen as a dried pear." Dame Quickly coming suddenly upon him in this mood, he grew furious when she told her errand from the good ladies. "I have suffered more for their sakes," quoth he, "than the villanous inconstancy of man is able to bear." "And have they not suffered?" asked Mistress Quickly, playing her part of injured innocence right well. "Mistress Ford, good heart, is beaten black and blue." "What tell'st thou me of black and blue?" roared the bruised and suffering knight; and his troubles, moreover, had not ended with a beating, for he was like to be apprehended, he said, for the witch of Brentford, but that his admirable dexterity of wit and his counterfeiting the action of an old woman had delivered him from the knave constable. Thus he railed on, always boasting of his own good parts while he bemoaned the injuries that really resulted from their lack.

Dame Quickly soothed him as best she could, and, asking for more privacy that she might deliver her tidings, he invited her into his own chamber. There, at last, she prevailed with him to go to Herne's oak at midnight, promising to provide him a chain and a pair of horns. Then she

departed, well pleased with her success, and inwardly full of mirth at the old rogue's simplicity.

And now came Mr. Brook to see Sir John and to learn how his venture of the day before had prospered. The knight was full of promises for the future, for he felt a crying need of some of Brook's gold; but he was in a mighty rage about what had happened him, and desired nothing so much as revenge upon Ford, whom he vowed he would undo that night, for he pledged himself to deliver Ford's wife into Mr. Brook's hand.

As the Windsor clock struck twelve through the thick foliage of the park, Sir John came stealthily under the trees to keep his appointment by Herne's oak. He was dressed like a hunter and had a great pair of buck's horns on his head, fastened in a close hood that covered his ears and met under his chin. He muttered encouraging words to himself as he stole forward, for he was sore afraid of the dark, in spite of his vain boasting and show of courage. As he neared the huge gnarled oak which was to be his trysting-place with Mrs. Ford and Mrs. Page, the former came forth from her concealment in the trees and greeted him with well-feigned affection. He would have taken her in his huge arms, but that she retreated from his embrace and told him that Mrs. Page had come with her. "Divide me like a bribe-buck; each take a haunch," said he. "As I am a true spirit, welcome!"

Just then there came a strange noise abroad, and

the good wives pretended to be alarmed. "What should this be?" asked Falstaff, frightened in very truth.

"Away, away!" cried the dames in a breath, running off as they called; and, in an instant, Sir John was surrounded by a fairy throng, with Sir Hugh Evans as a satyr and Mrs. Quickly and Pistol as attendant sprites. They began to circle around him singing weird songs and twitching their tapers about on their swaying heads.

"They are fairies," quoth Sir John. "He that speaks to them shall die;" and he lay down upon his face in craven fear; they meanwhile chanting in time to their tip-toe steps and pinching him or burning him now and again with their tapers.

When they had sufficiently worked their will with him, there was a sound of a hunter's horn, at which all vanished away, and the sorry old gallant slowly rose, took off his horns, and got upon his feet. He looked around in terror, and well he might, for at the instant came running forth Page and Ford, with their wives, who seized him just in time to prevent him from taking to his ungainly heels. They made game of his foolish pretensions to gallantry, and it slowly dawned upon him that he had really been the dupe of the honest wives whom he had tried so hard to injure. Then said he, "I do begin to perceive that I am made an ass," which was a truth most aptly expressed; and he continued: "And these are not fairies? I was three or four times in the thought they were not,

and yet the guiltiness of my mind and the sudden surprise of my powers drove the grossness of the foppery into a received belief. See now, how wit may be made a Jack-a-lent, when 'tis upon ill employment," for he still believed in his wit, and was willing to blame its miscarriage upon any cause saving the right one of its dulness. He did not feel so much remorse for his sins as shame for his little wit, and, seeing this, Mrs. Page said these honest words: "Why, Sir John, do you think, though we would have thrust virtue out of our hearts by the head and shoulders, that ever any power could have made you our delight?"

"What, a hodge-pudding? a bag of flax?" said Ford, derisively; and Page, in his turn, called him "old, cold, and withered, and as poor as Job;" whereupon the crest-fallen knight acknowledged himself dejected, and gave himself up to them to work what punishment they would.

"Marry, sir, we'll bring you to Windsor, to one Master Brook, that you have cozened of money," said Ford, still smarting from the old knight's deceptions; but Page, with good-humoured forgetfulness of his evil designs, bid him come to his house and eat a posset, and thither all went the more merrily because suspicion and jealousy had been cured by good sport and fair humour.

TROILUS AND CRESSIDA.

WHEN the Trojan war was at its height, and neither the besieged nor the besiegers seemed to gain advantage in the daily combats before the city, there lived in Troy a certain soothsayer and priest named Calchas, who had a daughter called Cressida. This maiden was, with but one exception, the fairest lady in Troy; but she was of a coy and self-willed nature, and, though her beauty had won her many lovers, yet she had never chosen any of them for her husband.

The sole rival in loveliness to Cressida in the besieged town was Queen Helen, the wife of Menelaus, king of the Grecian city of Sparta. This beautiful queen had been stolen from her husband by Paris, a prince of Troy, and the theft had given rise to the war now raging between Troy and Greece, for all the brother kings of Menelaus had combined to aid him in his expedition against the prince who had thus wronged him.

Among the sons of King Priam of Troy was a prince named Troilus, who was deeply in love

with Cressida, but whose passion seemed in no wise returned by her. Cressida had, however, an aged uncle named Pandarus, who, being flattered that a prince of Troy should woo one of his family, as well as given by nature to meddling in the affairs of others, was eager to marry them without delay, and used every device he could invent to make favour for the young prince in the eyes of his niece. To him Troilus would come with all the woes of his unsuccessful suit, and Pandarus would make bold promises of his niece's consent which he knew no means of fulfilling. Then would he go to Cressida with a tongue full of praises of Troilus, who, he said, was a better man in arms and courage than Hector, the hero of the Trojan cause, and he brought the name of Troilus with new commendations into every sentence he uttered, thus hoping to win his niece's love for a wooer she was wont to flout and make game of.

But the truth was, that in her secret heart Cressida loved Troilus, though she put on an affected air of mockery and indifference because her nature revolted at her uncle's persistent praises of him. Indeed, she saw a thousand-fold more in this young prince than was shown in the glass of Pandarus's praise, yet she held off from giving her consent, because women, she said, are angels while they are being wooed; but being won they are little heeded. Men prize the thing ungained more than it is worth, and love is never so sweet as in the making, and for this reason she resolved

that, though love were kindling in her heart, yet no hint of it should appear through her eyes.

While the suit of Troilus stood in this unprosperous state, the affairs of the opposing forces of Troy and Greece were equally without issue. So little prospect was there of a speedy termination of the war, that some of the greatest leaders of the Grecians were grown indifferent and slothful, and threatening jealousies had sprung up among them. The mightiest warrior of them all, Achilles, had long avoided the field of battle, and lay idly in his tent laughing at the mockeries which Patroclus, his lieutenant and friend, made against his brother generals.

This condition of affairs alarmed the Grecian leader Agamemnon, and he called a council of his generals, among whom were Nestor, the oldest of all, Ulysses, Menelaus, and others of less note. They met before Agamemnon's tent, and he addressed them in a noble speech, saying that it was not a new matter to them that they had so far come short of their purposes, for after seven years' siege Troy's walls were still standing; but he bid them not to be abashed nor think the failure a thing to take shame for, because every action in the experience of men is biassed and thwarted, nor answers its aim. These things, he said, were but the trial by which great Jove tested the constancy of mankind, the fineness of whose metal is not found in fortune's love, but rather in the wind and tempest of her frown, where distinction, with

a broad and powerful fan, puffing at all men, winnows the light ones away; and what has mass or matter by itself lies rich in virtue and unmingled with anything more base.

To this wise utterance Nestor, and, after him, Ulysses, replied, and the latter said, boldly, that hollow factions and intrigues among themselves, and not the strength of Troy, had caused the failure of their conquest; and he accused the vain leaders who quarrelled over precedence in the field, and taxed foreseeing policy as cowardice, esteeming no act but that of the hand, so that the ram that batters down the wall was placed above the wisdom of him who made the engine.

But as he proceeded in his eloquent speech the sudden blast of a trumpet sounded, which announced the arrival of Æneas, a Trojan prince, who came, he said, to seek Agamemnon. When he was brought into the presence of the Grecian general he quickly told his errand, which was that his brother Hector, the greatest of the Trojan warriors, having grown rusty in the dull and long-continued truce, had commanded him to take a trumpet, and bear to the Grecians a challenge against their fairest in valor, to appear in view of the two armies on the morrow, when Hector would make it good with his sword that he had a lady wiser, fairer, and truer than ever a Greek did clasp in his arms. To which he added that if any one stood forth to accept the challenge, Hector would honour him; if none did, when he retired to Troy,

he would proclaim that the Grecian dames were sunburnt and not worth the splinter of a lance.

King Agamemnon made a brave answer and said that there would be one to meet Hector on the morrow; and the aged Nestor, with his Grecian heart still young in courage, added that if there were none of Grecian mould that had the spark of fire to answer for his love, he himself would hide his silver beard in a gold helmet and meet the challenger.

"Now Heavens forbid such scarcity of youth," replied the gracious Æneas, and he was then led away to Agamemnon's pavilion to be made welcome and feasted before his return to Troy.

After the rest had retired, the wise Ulysses and Nestor, men of far-seeing judgment, advised together of the state to which the Grecian arms had fallen, and Ulysses said that the pride which had grown up in Achilles and which threatened the fortunes of the Greeks must now be cropped or it would overthrow all. He saw well, he said, that the challenge which Hector had sent, however generally it was proclaimed, related only to Achilles; and to this Nestor agreed, saying that Achilles would not fail to find Hector's purpose pointing to him. "And wake him to the answer, think you?" asked Ulysses. The venerable Greek thought that it would, and he continued: "It is supposed that he who meets Hector is our choice, and that he deserves to represent us, and we should therefore guard against defeat by choosing our

mightiest." But Ulysses said that this was the very reason why Achilles should not meet Hector. It would be wiser to keep their best, like good merchants, in reserve, for if Achilles conquered Hector, they would better parch in Afric sun than suffer the pride and scorn of his eyes; but if he were overthrown, then they were defeated in the taint of their best man. To avoid this he craftily proposed that they make a lottery, and by a certain device let the dull Ajax, next in strength to Achilles, draw the chance to fight with Hector. And among themselves, he said, they should allow him to be the worthier man of the two, for thus they might humiliate Achilles. And if Ajax came safe off from the combat, they were rid of a powerful enemy; but if he failed, they still would have the better man to bring forth. Nestor relished this advice and said he would reveal it at once to Agamemnon, and thus, that the Greeks might retrieve their fortunes, all was planned by these two wise generals, who fought with policy as well as swords.

Meanwhile, in Troy, Hector and his brother princes were preparing to make good their bold challenge, for, though the eldest and mightiest must wield the sword, yet the fortunes of all Troy were centred in the combat. Troilus therefore placed all his love upon a single cast, and determined to win or lose Cressida once for all before the event of the morrow; to which end he agreed with Pandarus that they should go to the latter's

orchard on that same night, and that there Cressida should be brought to meet him.

This fell out as it was planned, though hours before the time appointed Troilus stalked, as he said, before the lady's door, like a strange soul upon the Stygian banks, staying for waftage. But presently Pandarus brought his niece to the orchard, blushing and fetching her wind as short as if she were frightened by a sprite, or like a newly-taken sparrow. "Come, come," quoth he, as he drew her reluctantly along, "what need you blush? shame's a baby!" She broke away and would have fled back to the house, but he caught her again, and, drawing aside her veil, showed her pretty blushing face to the enraptured Troilus. This ardent lover, like all his kind, was bereft of words by the presence of his sweetheart, but old Pandarus kept up a ceaseless chatter, which helped the lovers over their embarrassment, so that when the lady asked Troilus to walk in, he regained his senses and in a moment was at her side.

Cressida confessed at last that she had loved the young prince Troilus night and day for many weary months, and yet as she spoke she chid herself for revealing her love to him, for, she asked, who should be true to women when they are so unsecret to themselves? She feared that the utterance of her secret would give Troilus too great a power over her; and, as he let her run on in her pretty confessions, at last she asked him in very self-dread to stop her mouth. This he took

to be an invitation to a kiss, which he promptly accepted, when, blushing for her seeming boldness, she begged for pardon. "O Heavens! what have I done?" said she, and tried to run away. But he detained her, and renewed his vows again and again, swearing he would be as true as truth's simplicity and simpler than the infancy of truth. To this she made answer that she would outdo him in constancy. So rejoiced was he at thus winning her faith that he made many fair speeches, and said that true swains in love should, in the world to come, approve their truths by Troilus. And Cressida, in her turn, vowed that if she were ever false or swerved a hair from the truth, when time was old and had forgot itself, and water-drops had worn the stones of Troy, yet memory should upbraid her falsehood; or, if one in that far time should say: as false as air, as water, as sandy earth, as fox to lamb, as wolf to heifer's calf, or stepdame to her son; finally, to stick the very heart of falsehood, he might add, as false as Cressida.

Hereupon the eavesdropping Pandarus reappeared, crying, "Go to, a bargain made: seal it, seal it; I'll be the witness," with much more that showed his joy at the match; and Troilus was not slow to place the seal upon Cressida's sweet lips, when each one cried "Amen," and the troth was duly plighted.

Now in the camp of the Greeks, during this time, Calchas, the father of Cressida, who had

become a traitor to his native land and gone over to the Grecian army, began to feel a deep longing to have his daughter with him; and appearing before the Greek generals, he made claim upon them for recompense for his services to their cause.

There was, he said, among the lately taken prisoners a Trojan called Antenor, who was held very dear by the warriors of Troy, and he gave assurance that this Antenor was so important to the Trojan cause that King Priam would almost give up a prince of the blood rather than part with him. He asked, therefore, that this valuable prisoner be sent back to Troy to buy his daughter; which exchange accomplished, he said all debts due to him should be quite stricken off.

To this request Agamemnon readily assented, and he ordered that Diomedes should bear Antenor to Troy, and bring back Cressida in his place. He bid Diomedes furnish himself fairly for the interchange, and to learn also if Hector would appear on the morrow to make good his challenge.

With these directions Diomedes immediately set out for Troy, where he arrived in the night, after Troilus and Cressida had made their vows in Pandarus's orchard. He was well greeted by the Trojan princes, for his courage was approved and he was of much fame; and when he overtook Æneas, though they were deadly foes on the field, yet the Trojan welcomed him frankly, as a man of equal valor with himself.

Æneas had been commanded by King Priam to take Diomedes to Calchas's house, and there to render to him, in exchange for Antenor, the fair Cressida; but Paris, his brother, who was of the company, secretly told Æneas that he thought Troilus would be found at the same house, for Pandarus had hinted as much to him in the morning. Paris therefore bid Æneas run before and warn Troilus of their approach and of their errand, saying he feared they would find small welcome from their brother, for Troilus had rather Troy were borne to Greece than Cressida borne from Troy. But there was no help; for the bitter disposition of the time would have it so, and, obeying the king's behest, they started forward, Æneas hurrying on before them to waken Troilus from his dream of happiness.

Pandarus answered the hasty knock at the door, and when Æneas asked if Troilus were within, the old gossip feigned not to know it. "What should he do here?" he asked; but to Æneas's impatient request that Troilus should speak with him, Troilus himself made answer. In a few words Æneas told him his errand, and Troilus, submitting like a brave soldier, went forward to meet Diomedes and Antenor. Presently he returned with these and Paris, and, while the rest waited without, Troilus went in to bring forth Cressida. Pandarus had been quick to tell her what threatened, and when she saw Troilus she fell into his arms, weeping. "And is it true that I must go from

Troy?" cried she. "A hateful truth," he said. "We two, that with so many thousand sighs did buy each other, must poorly sell ourselves with the rude brevity of a single sigh," and he poured forth his heart in a storm of loving words, which presently Æneas interrupted from without. "Hark! you are called! the Genius so cries 'Come!' to him that instantly must die," said Troilus; but to prolong the dear moment of parting he answered Æneas that she would come anon, and, with one last embrace, again bid her be true of heart. "I true! how now?" she said, surprised at his little confidence; but he pleaded the bitter parting as his excuse, and said that he meant only, "Be thou true, and I will see thee." She trembled lest he should be exposed to dangers; but he said he would grow friend with danger, and he gave her as a parting keepsake a sleeve to wear as a token of his love. In exchange, she gave him one of her gloves. "When shall I see you?" she asked. "I will corrupt the Grecian sentinels to pay you nightly visits; but yet, be true," said he. She drew back, vexed at his importunity. "Hear why I speak it, love," he implored. "The Grecian youths are so full of quality, flowing and swelling over with arts and exercise, that a kind of godly jealousy makes me afraid." She accused him of loving her not, so much she resented his false suspicions; but he said he should die a villain if he did not wholly love her; yet he persisted that in each grace of the Greeks there lurked a still devil

that tempts most cunningly. "But," he begged, "be not tempted!" "Do you think I will?" asked Cressida, half angry now at his doubts. He said no, at last; but at the same moment, Æneas, growing impatient, called again, whereupon the lovers kissed and parted. At the door Cressida was delivered over to Diomedes; but Troilus said he would not leave her until they had reached the gates of the city; nor did he, but walked by her side, telling Diomedes what manner of maid she was. "Entreat her fair," he said, "and by my soul, fair Greek, if ever you stand at mercy of my sword, name Cressida and your life shall be as safe as Priam is in Ilion."

When, in the early morning, Diomedes with Cressida approached the Grecian camp, they saw the lists set out for the combat between Hector and Ajax, and all the generals assembled to behold the fight. But Hector had not yet appeared, and Ajax, clad in his massive armor, grew impatient. He bid his herald crack his lungs in a great blast on the trumpet; but no trumpet sounded in return. As they listened eagerly for some sign from Hector, Diomedes and Cressida came into view in the dim morning light, and Agamemnon asked, "Is this the lady Cressida?" Diomedes told him that it was, and the king gave her a fair greeting on the lips, whereupon each lord in his turn saluted her in like manner. Cressida seemed not displeased at this; but when Diomedes led her away to her father, the wise Ulysses, who knew that a woman's

sweetness lay in modesty and not in a bold scattering of her favours, cried out, fie upon her, and said there was a language in her eye, her cheek, her lip, nay, that her very foot spoke wantonness.

But before Cressida had quite vanished among the tents, the great Hector and his train came into the lists. Æneas, his brother, greeted the Greeks with fair words and asked whether the fight should be to the edge of all extremity or should be limited by any conditions. Hector, he said, cared not, but would be pleased at either decision. Then Achilles, who had been, through the devices of Nestor and Ulysses, placed second to Ajax, and was therefore glad to point out any affront to that warrior, answered that this was done like Hector, but done a little proudly and a great deal underestimating the knight opposed to him. Æneas said that that which looked like pride in Hector was courtesy, a merited rebuke to the selfish Achilles; and he further told him that as Ajax was half made of Hector's blood, being his near-related cousin, half of Hector, in love for him, stayed at home.

At this same moment Diomedes came back, and King Agamemnon bid him agree with Æneas upon the terms of the combat; and when all these preliminaries were settled the opponents entered the list, and the fight began. Each knight was cheered on by shouts from his own side, and mighty blows were rained down upon the ringing armor, till at last the judges cried enough, and the

panting warriors separated. Ajax vowed he was not yet warm and was eager to begin again; but Hector said he would have no more, for Ajax was his father's sister's son, and that obligation of their blood forbid a gory emulation between them. He embraced Ajax, as the fashion then was, and bid him farewell; upon which the bold Greek, though little schooled in courtesies, asked his famous cousin to come to the Grecian tents; and Diomedes, seconding the request, said it was Agamemnon's wish, and that the great Achilles did long to see the valiant Hector unarmed. With this, the noble Trojan bid Troilus go with him, and, sending away his other followers, went hand in hand with Ajax to see the Grecian knights.

Each general in turn greeted him, and lastly Achilles, with whom he exchanged many friendly threats, and whom he entreated to let the Trojans see him in the field. Achilles was stung by this request, and said that on the morrow he would meet Hector, fell as death; but to-night all should be friends. They shook hands upon this match; then all but Troilus and Ulysses entered Agamemnon's tent, there to feast and make merry; and as they sat about the board the tambourines beat loud and the trumpets blew a lusty welcome to the great soldier, their guest.

But Ulysses, who had been detained a moment from entering by Troilus, told the young Trojan, at his earnest entreaty, that he might find Calchas that night at the tent of Menelaus, where he feasted

with his daughter and Diomedes; and, knowing not that he sent unutterable pangs to the heart of Troilus, he told him how, since Cressida had come to the camp, Diomedes looked neither to heaven nor to earth, but bent all his gaze upon her alone. Troilus did not betray his feelings; but only begged Ulysses to bring him to Menelaus's tent after they had parted from Agamemnon; and this Ulysses gladly consented to do.

At last the revelling in the leader's tent was over, and the Greek lords and their guests parted, some to retire and some to renew the feast at the tent of Achilles, who had invited Hector to visit him also. Old Nestor tarried for this, and Achilles asked Diomedes; but the young soldier said he could not stay, for he had important business then pressing, and so went forth with his torch into the darkness. "Follow his torch, he goes to Calchas' tent," whispered Ulysses to Troilus, and offered to keep him company. These two went speedily after Diomedes, and presently found him hailing Calchas at his tent. The Greek asked for Calchas's daughter, and the soothsayer's voice from within said, "She comes to you." The two eavesdroppers stood close, where the torch would not discover them, and in an instant they saw Cressida came forth. "How now, my charge?" asked Diomedes, tenderly. "Now, my sweet guardian, a word with you," said she, and the two went apart whispering together. "Will you remember?" Troilus heard his rival ask. "Remember? yes,"

quoth she; "but sweet honey Greek, tempt me no more to folly." Then Diomedes pretended to go from her, and she detained him, crying, "Hark! one word in your ear!"

This scene awoke all the bitterness of Troilus's soul. He could have fallen upon them then and there; but he nobly restrained himself and showed his pain only in broken exclamations. Ulysses saw that he was moved, and proposed that they should depart lest his displeasure grow beyond control. But Troilus would not go. "See, she strokes his cheek!" he muttered, and then Cressida disappeared into the tent and brought forth a token for her new lover. "Here, Diomed," said she, "keep this sleeve," and Troilus saw that it was the very sleeve he had given her as a token of love on the night of their parting. "O beauty! where's thy faith?" he groaned; and again Ulysses warned him to be patient.

For one moment Cressida felt a twinge of conscience. She said to Diomedes, "You look upon that sleeve; behold it well. He loved me—O false wench!" and then she snatched at it to have it back. "Whose was it?" asked the Greek. "No matter, now I have it again," said she, and the remembrance of her love for Troilus overcoming her present fancy, she told him she could not meet him to-morrow night, and bid him visit her no more. For the moment Troilus's hope was high; but instantly Diomedes snatched the sleeve, and a pretty encounter took place between him

and Cressida, who, when he pressed to know its owner, said, at last, "'Twas one that loved me better than you will; but now you have it, take it." Then the young Greek bound the token on his helmet, saying that on the morrow it should grieve the spirit of him who dared not challenge it. Troilus, almost leaping from his concealment, muttered, fiercely, "Wert thou the devil, and wore it on thy horn, it should be challenged."

When Diomedes had finally parted from her, Cressida lingered in the darkness, and Troilus could hear her murmur, "Troilus, farewell! one eye yet looks on thee; but the other eye perceives where my heart is." "All's done, my lord," Ulysses said anon, and slowly they departed, Troilus scarcely believing that what he had heard and seen could be true.

As they paced onward they encountered Æneas, who had, he said, been seeking his brother this hour. He told them that Hector was even then arming in Troy and that Ajax stayed to conduct them home. Troilus gratefully thanked Ulysses and bid him adieu, and then, groaning a farewell to his fair one and uttering a threat against Diomedes, he started away with Æneas.

When they reached Troy, Hector was in arms and was about to set out for the battle-field; but he was restrained by his wife Andromache and his sister Cassandra, the prophetess, for they had both dreamed ominous dreams and feared the day portended ill to him. They clung about his great

armoured form and pleaded with him not to go, but he told them that, though every man holds life dear, yet the true man holds honour far more precious than life, and that he stood engaged to many Greeks to appear that morning against them. Even his father, the venerable King Priam, prayed him not to go; but Hector was firm, for his oath was passed, and, rebuking them for their vain forebodings, he set bravely forth. "O farewell, dear Hector," wailed Cassandra after him. "Look, how thou diest! look, how thy eye turns pale! Look, how thy wounds do bleed at many vents. Hark, how Troy roars! how Hecuba cries out! How poor Andromache shrills her dolours forth! Behold! distraction, frenzy, and amazement, like witless antics, meeting one another, and all cry, Hector! Hector's dead! O Hector!" Thus pitifully foretelling the woe that was to be, she threw a cloud of grief over the great soldier's setting out; but his heart was too bold to be stayed by such womanly fears, and he went valiantly on against the foe.

Troilus was not long in following Hector; and when he reached the field his first encounter was with Diomedes, who by some mischance captured his horse and instantly sent it off to Cressida as signifying that he had conquered the amorous Trojan. But this was in no wise the truth, and Troilus sought out a later opportunity for taking his revenge.

Hector fought with a matchless valour that day,

and exceeded all he had ever done before in mighty blows. There seemed, as old Nestor said, a thousand Hectors in the field, for now here he fought on Galathe his horse, and anon he would be there on foot; and again there the Greeks flew before him like shoals of fish before the belching whale; and in another instant he would be yonder where they fell down before him like a mower's swath. Patroclus, the friend of Achilles, was slain, among others, and the Greeks, in despair of holding the field against Hector, sent his body to Achilles, for they knew that, if anything could arouse the proud and indolent soldier, the sight of his dear companion's body would do it. And presently Ulysses, who had carefully watched for some sign of Achilles's wrath, came joyously forth with the news that the mightiest of the Greeks was arming, weeping, cursing, and vowing vengeance. Ajax, also, who had grown surly through the prolonged peace, was arming because of Patroclus's death. He foamed at the mouth and was at it, roaring for Troilus, who had that day done mad and fantastic execution on his friends.

It was not long before Achilles was a-field. "Where is this Hector?" he shouted. "Come, come, thou boy-queller, show thy face; know what it is to meet Achilles angry;" and, as if to answer his boastful threat, Hector was at hand on the instant. The huge Greek plunged at him without warning, but Hector out of courtesy bid him pause. Achilles cried out against courtesy, but

said that the proud Trojan, as he called him, might be happy that his arms were out of practice, for that his long rest and negligence would now befriend him. But he accepted the heroic Hector's truce, and retired, threatening that the Trojan should hear of him again. "Fare you well," said Hector, "I would have been a fresher man had I expected you," and he turned to meet Troilus, who just then came up, crying that Ajax had taken Æneas, and vowing that he would be taken too or bring him off.

But Achilles, notwithstanding his great fame and marvellous strength, felt it needful to resort to stratagem to conquer Hector. He called about him his Myrmidons and bid them attend where he wheeled, but to strike not a stroke until he had found the bloody Hector. Then, he commanded, they must empale him round about with their weapons and execute their arms in the most deadly manner, for it was decreed that Hector the great must die.

Thus instructed, the band followed their leader through the field until the Trojan was overtaken, and when they met, Achilles cried, "Look, Hector, how the sun begins to set, and how ugly night comes breathing at his heels; even so does the day of Hector's life draw to a close." But the noble Trojan had slung his shield behind him and put up his sword, because the sun was low and the twilight at hand, and he showed Achilles that he was unarmed, and begged him, as he himself

had already done, to forego his advantage. But Achilles steeled his heart against honour and knightly courtesy, and he commanded his fellows to strike without mercy, for here was the man he sought. This they did with deadly aim, Achilles crying the while: "So, Ilion, fall thou! now, Troy, sink down! here lies thy heart, thy sinews, and thy bone!" Then he bid his soldiers to shout aloud that Achilles had slain the mighty Hector; and as they raised their voices the cry was answered by the signal of retreat which sounded through the Grecian ranks, followed in turn by the Trojan trumpets; for the night had fallen and the bloody day was over.

At Achilles's command his Myrmidons tied the great Hector's body to his horse's tail, and he drew him, clanking in his steel, along the field. Great shouts went up among the Greeks at the news of Hector's death; but when Troilus reached the Trojan camp with the fatal tidings, there was a grief so deep that hope of revenge alone bore the warriors up for the march back to Troy. "Who shall tell Priam and Hecuba?" groaned Troilus. "The word will turn him to stone, make Niobes of maids and wives, and cold statues out of youth. Hector is dead! There is no more to say." And then, stretching his arm aloft in defiance towards the Grecian tents, he uttered a curse against them and the great-sized coward Achilles, and passed with his heavy-hearted forces onward to Troy.

KING JOHN.

NEW YORK STATE

KING JOHN.

WHEN Richard the Lion Heart was killed by a French arrow at Chaluz, his dominions fell by inheritance to his nephew Arthur, son of Geffrey Plantagenet, Duke of Brittany. But Arthur was not allowed to take his own, for his uncle, John, usurped the throne of England and laid claim, as well, to Arthur's dukedom of Brittany. Philip, the French king, for some hidden purpose, espoused the cause of Constance, the mother of Arthur, and of the young duke himself, and this led to an invasion of France by the English King John.

The two armies met before a town in France called Angiers, which acknowledged allegiance to the English throne; but would not open its gates to the usurping English king until he had done battle with the French, and made good his unlawful claim to kingship.

It was a brilliant company of kings, princes, and warriors in the apparel of war which was gathered at the great gates of the town, and

with them came the noble ladies of either realm. Queen Elinor, the mother of King John and grandmother of Duke Arthur, with Blanch of Spain, the usurper's niece, were with the English; and Constance, the mother of Arthur, was in the train of Philip of France.

King John had met the French king with a peaceful greeting, notwithstanding the battalions of dauntless English spirits who followed him, wearing upon their backs their entire fortunes turned into the gear of war. But there was a menace beneath his courtesy, and if Philip refused him entrance upon what he boldly called his own, then should France bleed and peace be broken.

King Philip was equally forbearing in his answer; but he insisted on the claims of Duke Arthur, of whom he was rightful guardian, and condemned the usurpation of his throne. England, Ireland, Anjou, Touraine, and Maine, he said, were Arthur's realms, and he demanded them from King John, and bid him lay down his arms and surrender them.

But John proudly defied King Philip, and commanded Arthur of Brittany to yield to him, promising him more than the coward hand of France could ever win.

"Come to thy grandame, child," coaxed Queen Elinor; and Constance, his mother, mocked the queen with babyish words; but Arthur himself, who was a manly little prince, and hated all the coil that was being made for him, bid them to be

at peace. In despair, he said he would rather be laid low in his grave than be the cause of the contention he had aroused. Hereupon, Queen Elinor and Constance fell to scolding at each other with tongues made the bitterer by the imminent war, until King John cried out in anger, "Have done!" Just at this same moment the citizens of Angiers appeared above upon the walls, and made answer that they would prove loyal to him who proved himself king by gage of battle.

Thus urged on to the fight, King John commanded his warriors to ride up higher to the plain and there set forth their regiments to the best advantage; while King Philip rode forward to occupy an opposite hill.

Then there arose a great noise of clashing arms and the shouts of onset and neighing of horses, mingled with the groans of the wounded. The fight was fierce enough, as the men of Angiers could see from their walls, but neither side had the advantage, so that when the opposing heralds of King John and King Philip appeared at the city gate and demanded allegiance for either side, the citizens refused to open until the battle had been fought out and one side was proclaimed the victor. For, repeated they, they would acknowledge the king of England only when they knew him.

Then the Bastard, as he was called, a natural son of Richard the Lion Heart, proposed a new method of settling the warfare, which would, at the same time, punish Angiers for its obstinacy.

The town flouted the kings, he said; her citizens, standing securely on the battlements, gaped and pointed at their acts of death. He urged them, therefore, to be friends a while, and to join in bending their sharpest malice against Angiers. France should go to the east, and England to the west, and mount their battering cannon over against each other till their soul-fearing clamors should brawl down the flinty ribs of the city. That done, they should dissever their united strengths and turn face to face in a new battle for supremacy.

This counsel pleased the kings well, and they began forthwith to plan for the assault. England chose the western position, and France and Austria, the ally of France, purposed to be opposite at the north and south, which much beguiled the Bastard, for, quoth he, with secret rejoicing, "Austria and France shoot in each other's mouth. I'll stir them to it."

But now the citizens of Angiers began to be mightily alarmed, and appealed to the kings to hear them before they proceeded to the bombardment. This was granted them all the more readily because the aim of the new plan was to bring them to hear reason and not actually to destroy so costly and fair a city. "Speak on with favour," said King John; and the spokesman of the town made this proposal: "That daughter there of Spain, the Lady Blanch," said he, "is niece to England. Look upon the years of Lewis the

dauphin of France, and that lovely maid. If love should go in quest of beauty, or virtue, or birth, where should he find them fairer than in Blanch? and the young dauphin is her equal in all things. A union between these two shall do more than a battery against our fast-closed gates, for at this match they shall be flung open wide and give you entrance; but without this match the sea itself is not half so deaf, nor death half so peremptory as are we to keep this city."

Urged by the crafty Queen Elinor, and questioned by King Philip, John replied that if the dauphin could find it in his heart to love the princess, her dowry should weigh equal with a queen's, for he should receive with her Anjou, Touraine, Maine, Poictiers, and all that England owned on that side the sea, excepting only the city now besieged. "What say'st thou, boy?" cried King Philip; and the dauphin, who was gazing with eyes full of a new-born love upon the Lady Blanch, was quick to protest that he never half so much loved even himself as now when he found himself drawn in the flattering table of her eye. He led her aside, and they whispered together the warm words of an instantaneous passion, until presently King John bade them declare aloud their love. This done, their hands were joined by King Philip, while the Duke of Austria called upon them to join their lips as well. Then the king of France cried aloud to the citizens of Angiers to open their gates and let in the amity

which they had made, for at St. Mary's chapel the rites of marriage should forthwith be solemnized.

The Lady Constance had before the battle retired to the French camp, and was not present during this last turn of affairs. She was sad and passionate at King Philip's tent; but had she known of the new league formed with her foes, her sadness would have found little cure in the unhappy news. The kings, therefore, set about healing the wound they had inflicted upon her by planning that young Arthur should be created Earl of Richmond, and that he should be lord of the rich fair town of Angiers. "Call the Lady Constance to our solemnity," commanded King John, and he passed onward into Angiers with his long array of followers clanking their arms and flying the banners of England at his back.

When Constance heard that Lewis was pledged to marry Blanch she refused to believe it, for this was a baseness in the French king which she could not credit. She had his oath to the contrary; and she threatened the messenger with punishment for frightening her: a woman sick and capable of fears, a widow, oppressed with wrongs. "Lewis marry Blanch!" she cried. "Oh, boy, then where art thou? France friend with England! Then what becomes of me!" and wailing thus, she seated herself upon the ground in very despair and refused to obey the command of the king. "I will not go with thee. I will instruct my sorrows to be proud. Let kings assemble to me, for my grief is

so great that no supporter but the huge firm earth can hold it up. Here sit I and sorrow. Here is my throne, and kings shall come and bow to it."

As she leaned over and lamented aloud in the excess of her suffering, the whole warlike company of kings and nobles approached where she sat. King Philip soothed her with words which feigned to overlook her sorrow in the joy of France; but, made more stately by grief, she rose to her feet, and heaped upon him the bitterness of her soul. The Duke of Austria especially did she reproach for his duplicity, for he had sworn upon his stars, his fortune, and his strength to be her soldier, and now he had fallen over to her foes. "Thou wear a lion's skin!" she cried, scornfully. "Doff it in shame, and hang a calf-skin on those recreant limbs!" And Austria, who was at heart a braggart, answered: "O that a man should speak those words!" Whereupon the Bastard, who was nimble of wit as well as brave, repeated them again and again, but took no harm from the duke.

But now came hastening up the papal legate, Pandulph, hailing the kings with much reverence and announcing his errand: "In the name of Pope Innocent," quoth he, turning then to King John, "I do demand why thou against the church, our mother, so wilfully dost spurn, and keep Stephen Langton, chosen Archbishop of Canterbury, from that holy see?" King John answered with slight regard for the pope, and bade his messenger reply to him that no Italian priest should tithe and toll

in his dominions. But this was blasphemy in the ears of King Philip, and he remonstrated with his irreverent brother, but to no avail, for John was a bold heart and feared nothing in the achievement of his dark purposes, which were all the more dangerous because in lacking conscience he kept a mighty courage.

"Then," pronounced Pandulph, "by the lawful power that is given me, thou shalt stand accursed and excommunicated, and he shall be blessed who doth revolt from his allegiance to an heretic, and that hand shall be called meritorious which takes away, by any secret course, thy hateful life." The legate, seeing that the papal curse alarmed the King of France, bade him let go the hand of King John, while Queen Elinor and Constance pleaded each as her cause swayed her. But Lewis, the dauphin, urged his father rather to risk the light loss of the friendship of England than purchase a heavy curse from Rome, and Blanch, now his wife, foreseeing the approaching trial to her loyalty, begged it be the curse of Rome. "O Lewis, stand fast!" said Constance; "the devil tempts thee in likeness of a new-made bride."

King Philip, whose nature was not a firm one, wavered between this opposing counsel, and finally threw himself upon the legate for direction. Should he make war against a friend whose amity he had just won through holy wedlock? Should he thus play fast and loose with faith? Pandulph was unswerving in his enemity to England so long as

King John refused obedience to the pope, and he therefore urged King Philip to take up arms and be the champion of the church, otherwise he too would fall under the papal curses and die beneath their black weight. The dauphin cried to arms, in spite of his bride's sad pleading, even upon her knees, while Constance, also kneeling, prayed him not to alter the doom of Heaven.

At last King Philip, under threat of an immediate curse from Pandulph, gave way and boldly broke his bond with England. King John swore that he should rue the hour within the hour, and set about his preparations for another onset. But the lot of the Princess Blanch, newly married to the dauphin, was the unhappiest of all, for she must make choice between a lover and a loving kinsman, and whichever side won, on that side she would lose. She went dutifully with her husband, but where her fortune lived, said she, there died her life.

The fight raged long and hotly. The lusty Bastard sought and found revenge upon the Austrian duke and carried away his craven head as a trophy. There was advance and retreat upon both sides, but step by step the English won the day. The young Duke Arthur, the coveted prize of England, fell into King John's cruel hands, giving him hope at last of security on his English throne.

As King John and his attendant lords drew together on the victorious field, near Angiers, he spoke gently to his nephew and strove to soften

his grief, but Arthur was not grieving for himself, and nothing could stanch the pitiful tears which flowed for his mother.

But the sympathy of King John was not deep, for he turned away from the grieving lad to make hasty uses of his conquest. He commanded that his mother, Queen Elinor, should stay behind in France, while the Bastard should hie away for England before his own coming to shake revenue out of the bags of hoarding abbots: for the fat ribs of peace must now be fed upon by the hungry warriors.

Then the king drew Hubert, his trusty chamberlain, aside and unburdened his heart of a purpose which had long lain there like a smouldering ember ready when time was ripe to leap into flame. In an endearing and familiar tone he called Hubert close to his side and thanked him overwell for his long love, as one will remember to do when he desires some favour more difficult than usual to be done. "Give me thine hand," said the king, gravely. "I had a thing to say,—but I will fit it to some better time. By Heaven, Hubert, I am almost ashamed to say what good respect I have of thee." Hubert answered that he was much bounden to his majesty, and humbly awaited what was to be revealed. "Good friend," the king began anew, "thou hast no cause to say so yet; but thou shalt have. I had a thing to say, —but let it go. The sun is in the heaven, and the proud day is all too wanton to give me audience.

If the midnight bell did with his iron tongue and brazen mouth sound on into the drowsy race of night, if this same were a churchyard and thou wert possessed with a thousand wrongs, or if that surly spirit, melancholy, had baked thy blood and made it heavy-thick, or if that thou couldst see me without eyes, hear me without ears, and make reply without a tongue, using conceit alone, then, in despite of watchful day, I would pour my thoughts into thy bosom. But, ah, I will not!—yet I love thee well; and, by my troth, I think thou lovest me well." "So well," said Hubert, "that what you bid me undertake, though death were its adjunct, by Heaven, I would do it!"

Then the king looked watchfully around till his stealthy eyes alit upon the young duke, his prisoner, where he stood in talk with the queen. "Good Hubert, Hubert," he said, repeating the name as his averted gaze watched the boy,—"Hubert, throw thine eye on yon young boy. I'll tell thee what, my friend, he is a very serpent in my way; wheresoever my foot treads he lies before me. Dost thou understand me? Thou art his keeper."

Hubert made promise that he should not further offend his majesty. "Death," hissed King John, in a prolonged whisper. Hubert was startled. "My lord?" he questioned. "A grave," whispered the king. Then Hubert understood. "He shall not live," he said; and the king said, shifting his black mood to a gay one, "Enough. I could be

merry now. Hubert, I love thee. Well, I'll not say what I intend for thee. Remember!" and he strode with fair words up to his mother and the young duke, to whom he turned at last and bid him depart for Calais forthwith, at the same time appointing Hubert to be his man to attend on him and do him all true duty.

When the trusty Hubert had finally reached England with the little prisoner and secured him in his own castle, he set about executing the evil wishes of the king with a heart not so base as it was loyal to its master. The king's commands had now been conveyed to the chamberlain in a letter which decreed that Arthur's eyes must be burned out with hot irons. Two attendants of the castle were engaged by Hubert for the cruel work, but he himself felt in duty bound to see it performed. He agreed with his henchmen that when, after entering Arthur's cell, he should stamp his foot as a signal, they should rush forth and bind the boy fast to the chair. One of the men was fearful of the consequences of such a deed, but Hubert frowned upon his uncleanly scruples and bade him fear not. Then the attendants withdrew into concealment among the arras' folds, and the chamberlain called to the young lad to come forth.

Fair was the greeting which passed between them, for Arthur suspected no wrong from one whom he had learned to love. He noticed that Hubert was sad, who answered, "Indeed, I have

been merrier." Then the little prince, whom suffering had taught to be over-wise, prattled on in his childish mood. "By my christendom," quoth he, "so I were out of prison and kept sheep, I should be as merry as the day is long;" and so he might have been, even where he was, but that he doubted his uncle, the king, practised more harm against him. At last he said, with a sweet touch of pathos, that it was not his fault that he was Geffrey's son, and, ending with a sigh, exclaimed, "I would to Heaven I were your son, Hubert." This appeal almost overcame the grim chamberlain's sense of duty. He hardly dared to listen to the boy's innocent prate, for he knew it would awaken a mercy which now lay dormant. But Arthur noticed the struggle pictured in his grim face, and asked if he were sick. "In sooth, I wish you were a little sick," he said; "that I might sit up all night and watch with you. I warrant, Hubert, I love you more than you do me." The stern man felt that he must act at once if he would do the deed at all. He thrust forth the king's letter into Arthur's hand, commanding him to read it.

"And will you do this?" asked Arthur. "Will you put out mine eyes, these eyes that never did so much as frown on you?" Hubert said, doggedly, that he had sworn it. Then he called forth the rough attendants, who came with cords and irons to do their foul work.

Arthur, brave little soul that he was, and heir to

the Lion Heart's courage as well as his realms, said that he would not struggle, so he were not bound. He would stand stock-still if only these bloody men were sent away. Hubert ordered them to go within, for he would be alone with the boy, and they retired, one of them murmuring aloud his satisfaction at being released from such a deed. Hearing his words, Arthur lamented that he had chid away a friend, and asked to have him back. But Hubert was impatient to be done with the hateful work, and roughly bade Arthur prepare himself; replying to his pitiful appeals that there was no remedy, none. "Oh, spare mine eyes," pleaded the little prince, "if it is only to look upon you, Hubert!" And he made so grievous a moan and touched so deeply the heart of the stern chamberlain, with whom duty had become the supreme purpose, that at last he relented and vowed he would not touch the boy's eyes for all the treasure that his uncle owned. But he cautioned Arthur that the king must not know that he still lived, to which end he said the spies that dogged his heels should be filled with false reports. Then, at last, his own manlier feelings overcoming his mistaken steadfastness to the king's commands, he leaned down to the little prince and bade him sleep securely and without doubt of Hubert, for he would not offend him for all the wealth of the world, no matter how much danger he might undergo for his sake.

The people of England had begun to murmur

against the imprisonment of the youth whom they held to be their lawful sovereign, and the great nobles, the earls of Salisbury and Pembroke, remonstrated with King John and requested Arthur's release. The king, knowing within himself what he had commanded Hubert to do, and believing Arthur to be dead, feigned to grant their request; then turning to Hubert, who had just entered the royal presence, he asked, "Hubert, what news with you?" The nobles whispered apart, for they secretly knew of Hubert's commission to kill Arthur, while the chamberlain falsely told the king that Arthur had died that very night. Then King John, with a satisfaction which he could ill conceal, turned to the whispering earls and said that the suit which they demanded was dead, for Arthur was deceased. They pretended to believe that the prince was carried off by a rumoured sickness, but the self-accused king thought he detected suspicion in the solemn brow of Pembroke, upon which he burst forth into a virtuous rage. Salisbury boldly charged that it was apparent foul play, and avowed it was a shame that greatness should so grossly commit murder. Then he and Earl Pembroke left the king's presence in hot indignation, secretly bent on discovering the prince's body, and the king awoke at last to the futility of his deed. "For," mused he, "there is no sure foundation set on blood, and no certain life achieved by another's death."

Just at this same moment came panting in a messenger with the news that an invading army from France, led by the dauphin, had landed in England. He also brought the unwelcome tidings of Queen Elinor's death, and told that the Lady Constance had died in a frenzy but three days before. This accumulation of woes made the king giddy, as he said; but presently the Bastard came in and gave report that the people were wavering in their loyalty and listening eagerly to prophecies that the king would deliver up his crown before the next Ascension-day. King John was stunned, but not broken in spirit. He made quick preparations for defending his realm, and sent forth the Bastard to thrust himself into the company of his deserting nobles who were going to seek Arthur's grave, for, said he, I have a way to win their love again.

When the Bastard had hastened out, Hubert came suddenly back bringing reports of dreadful portents in the sky, which, he said, old men and beldams in the street prophesied dangerously upon. Young Arthur's death was common in the mouths of all, and one would whisper another, griping his wrist as he made fearful action with wrinkled brows and rolling eyes. The smith stood idle, with open mouth, at his anvil, while the tailor, with hasty slippers thrust on contrary feet, told of the French army that was embattled in Kent.

The king grew angry with excess of grief, and

finding in Hubert a ready victim on whom to heap the overflow of his despair, accused him of murdering young Arthur. "I had a mighty cause to wish him dead," said he, "but you had no cause to kill him." Such is the ingratitude between accomplices in evil. The king pretended that Hubert had mistaken his meaning; but the chamberlain drew forth the royal letter and showed the king's hand and seal. Then, in the bitterness of his soul, King John broke into open abuse of his too-willing instrument. Had not Hubert been by, he said, a fellow marked by the hand of nature to do a shameful deed, the murder would never have come into his mind. To be endeared to a king, Hubert had destroyed a prince. If he had but turned an eye of doubt on the king's face as he spoke darkly, deep shame would have struck him dumb. But this he did not do, and the king blamed him as the cause of all his woes, bidding him to flee from his sight and never more to see him.

Hubert felt now that there would be no danger in revealing his disobedience to the king's commands, and he acknowledged that he had not killed Arthur, but that the boy was still alive.

King John was rejoiced to hear such welcome tidings, and he forgot Hubert's unfaithfulness to his commands in his joy at the discovery. He even begged the chamberlain to forgive the comment which, in a moment of passion, he had made upon his features, for he said his rage was blind

and the foul eyes of blood presented Hubert to him as more hideous than he really was. They parted anon in haste, Hubert going forth to find the angry lords and bring them to the palace; and the king to his closet.

When Hubert had consented to spare young Arthur's life he had dressed him in the clothes of a ship-boy, and thus thought to keep his existence a secret. But on the same night when the nobles went to search for his dead body, the little prince climbed to the walls of the castle where he was kept a prisoner, and, looking fearfully over at the great height he must leap to gain his freedom, felt afraid to venture. Yet, thought he, it is as good to die and go as die and stay, and with this to strengthen his resolution he leaped down on the hard stones beneath him and was instantly killed.

Just as the unhappy young prince thus expired, the lords Salisbury, Pembroke, and Bigot, who had been in search of his slain body, reached the spot where he had fallen. They were overtaken there by the Bastard, who urged them to return to their allegiance to King John. This they refused to do. They would not, they said, attend the foot that left a print of blood wherever it walked, and they bade the Bastard to go back and give the king their defiant answer. Looking up at the walls before them, they then saw that they were standing beside the prison; and almost at their feet they suddenly discovered the body, made even more beautiful by death, of their young prince and king. A

burst of indignation and grief went up from them as they knelt about him. Each great noble gave vent to his abhorrence of the king's deeds, for they justly thought King John was chargeable with this crime, and each uttered his love for the sweet and royal youth so slain. "All murders of the past," cried Pembroke, "do stand excused in this;" while Salisbury boldly accused Hubert of the shameful work, under the king's commands. Then they vowed, kneeling before the ruin of that sweet life, never to taste the pleasures of the world, nor be infected with delight, nor be conversant with ease and idleness, until they had set a glory to the young head by giving it the worship of revenge.

At this moment Hubert approached in haste with the royal message, crying, "Arthur doth live and the king hath sent for you." Instead of heeding him, they drew their swords and bid him avaunt for a hated villain. They heaped foul epithets upon him, and would have slain him but for the interference of the Bastard. "What wilt thou do," asked Bigot of Hubert's champion, "second a villain and a murderer?" "Lord Bigot, I am none," said Hubert. "Who killed this prince?" asked Lord Bigot. Hubert said that not an hour since he had left him well. "I honoured him and loved him, and I will weep my date of life out for his loss," he groaned. But Salisbury would neither trust his words nor his tears, for villany is not without such rheum; and flourishing his sword,

he cried, "Away, with me, all who abhor the uncleanly savours of a slaughter-house," and, without more parley, they sped away towards Bury, to join the dauphin, leaving the Bastard and Hubert beside young Arthur's corpse. When they were out of sight the Bastard questioned Hubert if he had done this fair work, this deed of death, for if he had he were damned as black as Prince Lucifer; nay, there was not yet so ugly a fiend in hell as he, if he had killed that child. Hubert made solemn protest of his innocence, but all his most earnest words were weak to dispel suspicion, for the circumstances had conspired against him with an evil look. But as he took up the frail form in his arms the Bastard was moved by his tenderness. "I am amazed," he said, "and lose myself among the thorns and dangers of the world." Then, he added, aiding Hubert with a sad heart, "How easy dost thou take all England up;" and they passed on to the palace.

There they found that the king, bold-hearted though he was in war, and crafty in policy, had, through fear for his crown, entered into an inglorious alliance with Pandulph, the pope's legate, whose ban of excommunication had brought about the war with France after the marriage of the Princess Blanch with the dauphin. In token of his obedience to the pope, King John had surrendered up his crown to Pandulph and then had received it back, thus becoming a vassal of the church. As all this happened upon Ascension-

day before noon, the king bethought him of the prophecy reported to him by the Bastard, but he rejoiced at so easy a fulfilment of the prophecy, for he had thought to be constrained by force to deliver up his crown, and he now thanked Heaven, forgetful of his humiliation, that it was but a voluntary act. But in return for that act he had bargained to be relieved of his French foes, for Pandulph, to requite him, had promised to dismiss the powers led by the dauphin and to rid England of their presence. This cowardly agreement did not please the Bastard. His fiery nature, English to the heart, was for revenge and war. "Shall a beardless boy brave our fields and find no check?" he cried. "Let us, my liege, to arms." Perchance the cardinal, he suggested, could not do all he had promised; or, if he could, England should show at least a purpose of defence. The king left all to him as he should decide, and, with a flourish of his sword, the Bastard said, "Away, then, with good courage," and was gone to gather a force to oppose France.

Pandulph quickly appeared in the dauphin's camp and announced King John's reconciliation with the church of Rome. He commanded, therefore, that the French should wind up their threatening colours, and tame the savage spirit of war which animated them. But the dauphin's pride, and his ambition to rule in England through his wife's claim to the throne, which first had been aroused by the legate himself, together with the

great expense he was under in the equipment of his expedition, all conspired to make him reject the legate's commands. He refused to retire from the field, and the wily Pandulph could find no reasoning to change his purpose. As they thus stood in argument there was a flourish of trumpets, and the Bastard approached. He had come, he said, to learn how the legate sped in his negotiations, and when he was told, he cried aloud, in his most boisterous mood, that the young dauphin had judged well. Thereupon he spoke for the English king, who, he said, was prepared to receive the French in a warlike fashion, and to whip their pigmy arms from his territories. He then addressed the disloyal lords who had fled to the dauphin's ranks, merrily bidding them beware lest their own ladies and pale-visaged maids should come tripping forth against them, their thimbles turned into gauntlets, and their needles to lances, while their gentle hearts took on a fierce and bloody inclination. The dauphin strove to stem the torrent of his boasting, and bade him farewell; but the brave Bastard rattled on till the drums drowned his words. The fight was about to begin, and he retired in haste to his own forces.

King John was ill with a fever, and did not take part in the battle. Accompanied by Hubert, he was carried in his litter, for safety and so that he might be near at hand, to Swinstead Abbey. The battle waged hotly, with varying advantage to the French and to the English, and at its end

neither side could wholly claim the day. During its course, upon the report of a certain French lord named Melun, the Lords Salisbury and Pembroke were led to return to their allegiance. Lord Melun told them, as he lay dying, that the dauphin had resolved to behead them if he won the field, and they chose rather to brave the anger of King John than to suffer at the hands of Lewis. Hence it was that they, as well as the Bastard, hastened towards Swinstead Abbey, where lay the sick king. The offending lords, who brought Prince Henry, the king's son, in their company, were, at his request, pardoned by King John; and when the Bastard arrived, with the ill news that half the English army had been overwhelmed with the tide of the Lincoln Washes, he found them about the king's couch in the abbey. As the lords and Prince Henry spoke together in the orchard, the king was carried forth in a chair. "Ay, marry," said he, as he felt the leaves above him, "now my soul has elbow-room. It would not out at windows or doors." He complained of a heat in his bosom that crumbled all his bowels to dust. He was, he said, like a scribbled form on a parchment which shrank up against a fire.

In truth, a monk had poisoned the king, and he was consumed with an unbearable inward heat. None, he groaned, would relieve him by sticking icy fingers in his throat, nor would they let the rivers of his kingdom take their course through his burning bosom. Such were the agonized

words forced into his poor mouth by suffering. Prince Henry bent over him, weeping. "Would," said the young prince, "there were some virtue in my tears that might relieve you;" but nothing could now relieve the dying king, and in the midst of his nobles and warriors, where they stood about him under the shadows of the orchard-trees, he died, leaving his realm to his heir, Prince Henry.

When the Bastard was able to recover a moment from his grief, for he loved the king in spite of his many sins, he learned that Pandulph had lately arrived at the abbey with offers of peace from the dauphin, who desired to retire from the war. Thus the pope's legate, who had stirred the kings to war, became, for his own ends, the instrument of peace between them. King John's body was interred at Worcester, as he had willed it to be, and Prince Henry, relieved from the claims of the invading dauphin, was permitted to ascend the throne in peace

KING RICHARD II.

HENRY BOLINGBROKE, Duke of Hereford, and Mowbray, Duke of Norfolk, whom Bolingbroke suspected of disloyalty to King Richard the Second, quarrelled on that account and appeared before the king with bitter reproaches and accusations against each other, which at last came to a defiance to mortal combat. The king, who was Bolingbroke's kinsman, but who was, nevertheless, secretly jealous of him for his popularity with his subjects, seemed loath to grant the appeal to arms, but so hot were the disputants and so deep-rooted was their hatred that at last he consented and appointed Coventry as the place and Saint Lambert's day as the time for the meeting.

On that day the lists were set out upon the open ground near Coventry, and a throne for the king and seats for his nobles and courtiers were ranged around them. There was a throng of heralds and trumpeters in attendance, and the whole company glittered in holiday apparel, for the champions were famous knights and the fight was to be a

valorous one. When the king was seated, and John of Gaunt, Duke of Lancaster; his nephew, Duke of Aumerle; the lord marshal, and other noblemen had entered, there was a flourish of trumpets, answered in turn by a second blast, and the Duke of Norfolk in armour came into the lists preceded by a herald. King Richard bid the marshal to demand of yonder champion the cause of his arrival there in arms, to learn his name, and to swear him in the justice of his cause.

This being done in due order, and the duke having announced that he came under oath to defend his loyalty and truth to God, his king, and his succeeding issue against the Duke of Hereford, he took his seat, and awaited his opponent. Another trumpet sounded, and Bolingbroke, also in armour and preceded by a herald, came into the lists and was greeted by the same questions. He made fitting answer, and the marshal cried aloud the conditions of the combat, whereupon Bolingbroke craved to kiss the hand of the king, who, in his generous affection, descended from the throne and folded his cousin in his arms. Bolingbroke bid an affectionate adieu to his father, to Lord Aumerle, and to the lord marshal, after which he was ready to set his lance at rest, and begin the combat.

The Duke of Norfolk also took a solemn farewell of his friends, whereupon the marshal sent to each champion his respective lance. A herald then cried, "Harry of Hereford, Lancaster, and Derby

stands here for God, his sovereign, and himself, on pain to be found false and recreant, to prove the Duke of Norfolk a traitor to his God, his king, and him, and dares him to set forward to the fight." An opposing herald performed the same office for the Duke of Norfolk, and at last the knights stood over against each other awaiting the final signal. "Sound, trumpets; and set forward, combatants," cried the marshal. A charge was blown and the knights started. But they came to a sudden halt, for the king threw down his warder and all was stopped. "Let them lay by their helmets and spears and return to their chairs again," was the king's command. Then he withdrew, bidding the champions follow him that he might deliver to them his royal decree. This was that both of the contending nobles should quit the country and be banished: Hereford for ten years and Norfolk forever; and they were compelled to take an oath upon the royal sword that they would be obedient to the decree and make no attempt to embrace each other's love while they were in banishment; nor look upon each other's face, nor write, contrive, nor plot against England's throne.

The aged Gaunt showed visibly his grief at his son's harsh sentence, and the king, because he loved the old duke, said that his sad aspect had already plucked away four of the banished years, leaving but six. But Gaunt said he should reap little advantage from this leniency, for ere the six years could change their moons and bring their

times about, his inch of taper would be burnt and done. The king tried to cheer him by telling him that he had many years to live, but the old duke was broken-hearted for his son and would not be comforted. Yet the king was obdurate, and the banished dukes immediately departed from England.

Not long after this, as the king was on the point of setting out to quell a rebellion in Ireland, John of Gaunt was taken sick and prayed him to come to his bedside that he might listen to the sage advice of a dying man. King Richard was not displeased at the news of the duke's sickness, for he was in the last extremity to obtain money for his expedition to Ireland, and if Gaunt, his uncle, died while his direct heir, the Duke of Hereford, was banished, the king could claim all the duke's wealth for his own, using the lining of his uncle's coffers, as he said, to make coats for his soldiers.

Gaunt uttered words of wholesome counsel when the king came; but, as might have been expected, they were little relished by the wilful Richard. He grew angry at the old duke's presumption, which all the more incensed him because the words of warning were well deserved. The royal cheek turned pale under admonishment, and at last, when the prudent attendants removed the dying nobleman from the room, the king burst forth into a passion. "Let those," he cried, "that have age and the sullens die, for both become the grave."

The duke did not long survive this encounter,

and at his death his possessions were, with unseemly haste, forfeited to the crown by order of the king, thus depriving the banished Bolingbroke of all his inheritance saving his noble title of Duke of Lancaster.

When his hasty preparations were finished, thus aided by the unlawfully taken wealth of the house of Gaunt, King Richard set out for Ireland, leaving his uncle, the Duke of York, lord governor of England during his absence. The nobles and people of England were much dissatisfied with the king's conduct. He was basely led by flatterers, whose word he would take in preference to that of honest men; and through the malice and cunning of his favourites he was brought to do injustice against the lives of his subjects, their children, and their heirs. He had burdened the common people with grievous taxes, and quite lost their hearts; he had fined the nobles for ancient quarrels, and they also had fallen from him. In short, that which his ancestors had achieved with blows he had basely yielded in compromise, and had grown bankrupt like a broken man.

Talking in secrecy of these things with his fellow-sufferers the Lords Ross and Willoughby, the Earl of Northumberland revealed to them that intelligence had reached him from a bay in Brittany, called Port le Blanc, that Harry, Duke of Hereford, as he still called him, with a gallant company of gentlemen well furnished by the Duke of Bretagne, was, with eight tall ships, making for

England with all due expedition, and meant shortly to touch the northern shore. "Perhaps," said he, "they would have arrived ere this, but that they awaited the departure of the king for Ireland." He then appealed to his friends to shake off their slavish yoke and redeem the blemished crown from pawn, and urged them to post away with him to Ravenspurg. At this Lord Ross cried, joyfully, "To horse, to horse!" and with little delay they were in motion.

Bolingbroke had landed before these lords arrived at the north, and they joined him as he travelled through the wilds of Glostershire seeking the castle of Berkley, whither his uncle the Duke of York had retired to be in readiness to defend England against his invasion. On the road thither Bolingbroke overtook the duke, to whom he made humble obeisance. "Show me thy humble heart, and not thy knee," said the aged York; and when his nephew would have pleaded his honesty, "Tut, tut!" said the duke, "Grace me no grace, nor uncle me no uncle. I am no traitor's uncle. Why have those banished legs dared to touch the dust of English ground? Why, why have they dared to march so far upon her peaceful bosom, frighting her villages with war?" The young duke pleaded his cause stoutly but temperately. When he was banished, he said, he was banished as Duke of Hereford; but as he came, he came as Duke of Lancaster. He told his wrongs in manly words: how, his father being

dead, his rights and royalties were plucked from his arms perforce and given away to upstart spendthrifts. He was a subject, and challenged the law, yet attorneys were denied him. Therefore he personally laid claim to his inheritance of free descent.

The Duke of York was compelled to admit the justice of his nephew's claims, and, as he was powerless to take up arms against him, he remained neutral. Things past redress were, with him, past care. He invited Bolingbroke and his followers to his castle for the night, and the invitation was gladly accepted by the young duke, who in turn asked his uncle to go with him to Bristol Castle, which was held by Bushy, Bagot, and their accomplices, the caterpillars, as he said, of the commonwealth whom he had sworn to weed and pluck away. This in due time he did, for he captured them at Bristol and put them to death; after which he led his army into Wales in search of Glendower, an adherent of King Richard.

In the mean while the king, who had heard of the invasion of his realms, hastened back from Ireland and landed with a few attendants and soldiers on the coast of Wales near Barkloughly Castle. He was rejoiced to set foot again upon his native soil, and saluted the dear earth as if it had been able to understand his caresses. But he was much alarmed at the ill news which had reached him, though his courage and his determination to crush the rebellion were firm. He

said that not all the water in the rough rude sea could wash the balm from an anointed king, and that for every man Bolingbroke had pressed to lift shrewd steel against his crown, he had a glorious angel in pay. But such boastful statements could not conceal the king's anxiety, and when the Earl of Salisbury, who had come to meet him, arrived, he asked eagerly for tidings that might allay his fears. "How far off do your forces lie?" was the king's first question; but the earl had little comfort to give, for his forces, upon a rumour that the king was dead, had deserted him the day before, and gone over to Bolingbroke. The king was deeply saddened by the news; but when the Duke of Aumerle bade him take comfort and remember who he was, he said truly he had forgot himself, and cried, "Am I not king?" for he thought his uncle the Duke of York still had power enough to serve his turn.

But at this moment Sir Stephen Scroop came hastening up with a salutation that betided no good news. The king bore this latest alarm with all the more fortitude that he had already suffered the previous reverses. Scroop's tidings were of new calamities. White beards had armed their thin and hairless scalps, he said, and boys with women's voices strove to speak big and clap their female joints in arms, while the very beadsmen bent bows against his state. The king asked where were his favourites, and the knight told him how they had all perished at the hand of Boling-

broke. Hereupon Richard's pent-up feelings overwhelmed him, and he broke forth into lamentations. "For heaven's sake," said he, in his despair, "let us sit upon the ground and tell sad stories of the deaths of kings, for within the hollow crown that rounds the mortal temples of a king death keeps his court, and there sits scoffing at his state, infusing him with vain conceit, as if the flesh that walls our life about were impregnable brass. And at last he comes with a little pin, and bores through his castle walls and—farewell king!" In this vein Richard mourned his fallen fortunes, and would take little comfort; but at last the inspiring assurance of Aumerle that the Duke of York, his father, had yet a force at his command, awoke in the king his native courage, and his grief turned to defiance. But it was too brief a hope, for Scroop dashed it with the bitter news that his uncle York was joined with Bolingbroke. Then the king again bewailed his evil fate. He would hate him everlastingly, he said, who would bid him be of comfort any more; and he ordered his friends to go with him to Flint Castle, where, he said, he would pine away, obeying kingly woe.

It was not long after the retirement of King Richard to Flint Castle that Bolingbroke's forces came in sight and held a council beneath its walls. They found the castle, much to their surprise, flying the royal colours, which denoted that the king was there. Bolingbroke, when he had learned this, immediately sent Northumberland forward with a

message of loyalty to the king, saying he had come to lay his arms and power at Richard's feet provided his banishment were repealed and his lands restored. If this were not done he would use the advantage of his power, and lay the summer's dust with showers of blood. As the noble messenger advanced with his trumpet towards the castle, Bolingbroke's force, to show their fair appointments, began to march upon the grassy plain, but without the sound of threatening drums, which might seem a menace.

Northumberland blew a blast upon his trumpet, and was answered by another from within the castle, whereupon King Richard, surrounded by his little band of friends, came forth upon the walls for parley. When the message was delivered, the king made answer that his noble cousin Bolingbroke was right welcome, and that all his fair demands should be granted. But when Northumberland turned to go, the king's wonted strength came back to him, and he would have sent defiance to the traitor and died. But Aumerle counselled gentle words until time should send friends, and thus the deed was done which brought the king at last to ruin. "O God! O God!" he cried, in the bitterness of his impotency, "that ever this tongue of mine, that laid the sentence of dread banishment on yon proud man, should take it off again with gentle words! O that I were as great as my grief is, or lesser than my name!"

As he mourned thus, Northumberland came

back from Bolingbroke, at sight of whom Richard was stricken with a new grief. He would give up all, he said, in his fantastic woe, for a little grave; or be buried in the king's highway, where subjects' feet might hourly trample on their sovereign's head, as now whilst he lived they trod upon his heart. Northumberland approached within earshot, and the king turned to him, asking, "What says King Bolingbroke? Will his majesty give Richard leave to live till Richard die?" The earl said that Bolingbroke attended the king below in the base court, and Richard, with many bitter jests upon his descent, went down to meet him. "Sorrow and grief of heart make him speak fondly, like a frantic man," said Northumberland as the king approached.

Bolingbroke commanded all to kneel, and bent the knee himself. "Fair cousin," quoth the king, "you debase your princely knee. Your heart is up, I know, thus high," and he pointed to his head. Bolingbroke rose and made no claim but for his own; and the king granted his prayer with mock bountifulness, saying, "They well deserve to have that know the strongest way to get." Then turning to his uncle of York, who was in the train of Bolingbroke, he gave him his hand. "Nay, dry your eyes," he said, softly, to the old duke, who wept for his king; and to his cousin of Hereford he surrendered himself up, for force, he said, would have him do what it would: which was to set on towards London. "Cousin, is it so?" he asked;

and Bolingbroke, as if he implored rather than commanded, said, "Yes, my good lord;" whereupon they set out across the land.

When they came at last to London the streets were thronged with people, who had crowded forth to see the spectacle of a king led captive by his nobles. The duke, mounted on a fiery steed which seemed to know its aspiring rider, kept on his course with a slow and stately pace, while all tongues cried, "God save thee, Bolingbroke!" So many were the greedy looks of young and old darting through the casements upon the great duke's visage, that the very windows seemed to speak. It was indeed as if all the walls had said, with painted imagery, "Jesu preserve thee! Welcome!" while he, turning from one side to the other, with his bare head bent lower than his proud steed's neck, answered at every step, "I thank you, countrymen." The poor king rode after Bolingbroke as one who comes upon the stage when a famous actor has left it. The populace scowled upon him and gave him not a single welcome home, but threw dust upon his sacred head instead, which he shook off with a gentle sorrow, his face changing all the while from tears to smiles. God seemed to have steeled the hearts of men for some strong purpose or they must perforce have melted at the sight.

When all this was over, and the king well secured in prison by Bolingbroke, the latter made haste to appear in Westminster Hall before the Parliament, where presently arrived the Duke of

York to meet him. The duke brought the news that King Richard's willing soul adopted Bolingbroke as heir to the throne, and that he yielded up his sceptre to the possession of his cousin's royal hand. "Ascend his throne, descending now from him," said the old duke; then, in a loud voice, he cried, "Long live Henry the Fourth!"

Bolingbroke said he would ascend the throne in God's name; but the Bishop of Carlisle put forth a plea against it: "What subject can give sentence upon his king? and who sits here that is not Richard's subject?" The nobles were amazed at the Bishop's audacity, but he continued: "Shall the figure of God's majesty, anointed and crowned, be judged and himself not present?" Then the bold prelate called Bolingbroke traitor to his king, and prophesied wars and disorders in the state should he be crowned in Richard's stead. Such free speech as this could not go long unpunished, for all men's hearts were not yet fully affected to Bolingbroke, and might still be won over to their rightful ruler. The bishop was therefore arrested for treason; and, in order to give a semblance of legality to his usurpation, Bolingbroke ordered that King Richard be brought thither that he might himself surrender up his crown in the presence of the parliament.

King Richard came in anon, followed by officers bearing the crown. He asked why he had thus been sent for before he had shaken off the regal thoughts with which he reigned. He had not yet learnt, he said, to insinuate, flatter, and bend the

knee, and, with a voice unused to pleading, he prayed Bolingbroke to give sorrow leave to tutor him to proper submission. Then he turned to his sometime courtiers who stood about him and sadly said he well remembered them. "Were they not mine? did they not cry, All hail! to me?" It was a pitiful and a shameful sight thus to see a great king deserted in his time of necessity by those who had lived upon his bounty; but it is the sad fate of those who reach such great places to have few real friends, for the hearts of men are little steadfast, and will turn remorselessly away from a fallen ruler. At last the king desired to know what service he had been summoned thither upon; and the Duke of York told him it was to do that which he had offered of his own good will,—namely, to resign his state and crown to Henry Bolingbroke. "Give me the crown," said Richard; and, taking it in his hands, he asked Bolingbroke to seize it on the other side. When he had done so, the king pathetically said that the crown was like a deep well with two buckets filling one another. His was now the downward bucket, while Bolingbroke's was in the ascendant. "I thought you had been willing to resign," said Bolingbroke, for he grew impatient at the king's prolonged sorrow. Richard, as he said, was willing to give up his crown, but his griefs were his own, which Bolingbroke might not depose; he was still king of them. "You give me part of your cares," said Bolingbroke; but the king's woeful answer was, "Your

cares set up do not pluck mine down;" and speaking thus in everything like a royal king who still had a right to human griefs, Richard was more noble in his downfall than in his glory. He gave, he said, the heavy weight from his head, meaning his crown, his unwieldy sceptre from his hand, the pride of kingly sway from his heart; he washed away his balm with his own tears, gave his crown up with his own hands, with his own tongue denied his sacred state, and with his own breath released all duteous oaths; then finally he cried to Bolingbroke, in the bitterness of his despair, "Long may you live to sit in Richard's seat, and soon may Richard lie in an earthy pit."

Northumberland now handed the fallen king a paper which contained a confession of crimes against the state alleged to have been committed by himself and his followers, and the grim earl said that, by thus confessing, the souls of all men might know that he was worthily deposed.

"Must I do so?" asked Richard; then, turning to the earl, with veiled reproach, he said, "Gentle Northumberland, if your offences were upon record, would it not shame you to read them before so fair a troop? But if you should, you would find there one heinous article containing the deposing of a king and the breaking of an oath, marked with a blot in the book of heaven. Nay, all of you," he said, gazing around upon his accusers, "you who watch me while my wretchedness baits myself, though some of you wash your hands as Pilate

did, showing an outward pity; yet you Pilates have here delivered me to my sour cross, and water cannot wash away your sin." The nobles quailed beneath his reproaches, and Northumberland harshly bid him to make haste.

"Mine eyes are full of tears, I cannot see," quoth the king; and, again chided by the earl, who menacingly said, "My lord," he replied, with some of his kingly spirit, "No lord of thine, thou haughty, insulting man." But relapsing into his woeful state, he sighed, "Nor no man's lord; I have no name, no title. Alack the heavy day, that I have worn so many winters out and do not know now what to call myself." Then he asked for a mirror, that he might see his face since it was bankrupted in majesty. Again the earl bid him read the paper while he waited for the glass; but Richard cried out so haughtily against him that Bolingbroke commanded Northumberland to urge it no more.

When the glass was brought and put into the king's hands, he looked intently in it for a little space, then pathetically said, seeing his countenance unchanged, "Has sorrow struck so many blows upon my face and made no deeper wounds? O, flattering glass, you are like my followers in prosperity, and do beguile me!" Then in his excess of woe he dashed the glass upon the ground and broke it, the moral of which was, he said, that sorrow had destroyed his face. At last he asked his cousin Bolingbroke to grant him one boon,

which was that he might go out of the sight of him and his nobles. Bolingbroke granted his request by commanding that he be conveyed to the Tower, and thus the once great king came to his final humiliation.

When Richard was gone Bolingbroke set down the next Wednesday as the time for his coronation; whereupon he also retired, leaving a few of his followers to express in whispers their sympathy for Richard, which ripened at last into a plot against the new king.

In this conspiracy the Duke of Aumerle, who had always been a friend of King Richard, secretly took part, and one day when he went into the palace of his father the Duke of York and found his mother and father conversing about the fallen king, the duchess asked him who were now the favourites at court. "Madam," he said, "I care not;" and when the duke inquired if he would be at Oxford to take part in the coming justs and triumphs, he made a like indifferent answer, saying that he would. Then, seeing a seal that hung out from his bosom, the old duke asked what it was. His son looked pale at its discovery, and was for putting it out of sight; but the elder man insisted on seeing its writing. "My lord, 'tis nothing," said Aumerle; but his father answered that it was, then, no matter who saw it, and he reached eagerly forward, crying, "I will be satisfied; let me see the writing." Aumerle asked his pardon, and said it was a matter of small consequence, which for some

reasons he would not have seen; but the old duke was all the more intent on seeing it because of this, and quoth he, suspiciously, "I fear, I fear——"

"What should you fear?" asked the duchess, like a true mother, taking her son's part. She said it was but some bond he had entered into for gay apparel against the triumph day. "Bound to himself? What does he with a bond?" cried the old duke. And again he commanded Aumerle to show him the writing. "I do beseech you, pardon me, I may not show it," said Aumerle; whereupon his father snatched at the cord and drew it from him. With one look he read its contents, and called out, "Treason! foul treason! villain, slave!" then strode away to the door summoning his servants. "Ho! who's within there? Saddle my horse. Heaven for his mercy! What treachery is here!" When the duchess asked what it was, he only cried the louder, "Give me my boots, I say; saddle my horse. Now, by my honour, I will accuse him of treason to the king." The duchess, in her rage, bid Aumerle to strike the servant who brought the boots, but the young man stood as if stunned, and did not move. Then the duchess turned her wrath against the servant, and bid him get hence and never more come into her sight; the duke, meanwhile, crying again and again: "Give me my boots," like one beside himself. "Have we more sons?" asked the duchess. "Will you pluck my fair boy from my age and rob me of a happy mother's name?" But

the duke was bent only upon the discovery of the treason against the new king, and duty made him sacrifice his family ties. "A dozen of them," he said, meaning the companions of his son and followers of Richard, "have taken oath to kill the king at Oxford." The duchess, with a woman's ready wit, said that Aumerle should not take part in the plot, for they could keep him at home. "Away, fond woman!" said York; "were he twenty times my son, I would impeach him!" and he strode out and mounted his horse and cantered away with his retinue towards Windsor, where the king was then staying. Then the duchess turned to Aumerle and bid him also mount and spur post to the king to ask for pardon before his father had accused him. She would not be long behind, she said, and never would she rise from the ground till Bolingbroke had granted her son pardon.

The king was talking with his lords about his own unruly son, who spent his days with loose companions in London, when Aumerle entered, crying, "Where is the king?" He craved to be heard alone, and the lords withdrew. Then Aumerle knelt at the king's feet and besought him for pardon for a fault the king knew not of. Bolingbroke asked if it were intended or committed, for if only the first, however grave it might he, he said he would pardon it to win his cousin's after-love. Aumerle asked leave to turn the key in the door, that no one might enter until his tale was done. The king assented; but just

as the door was made fast the Duke of York arrived at the threshold, crying, "My liege, beware; look to yourself; you have a traitor in your presence." The king now thought the young duke meant treachery, and drawing his sword would have attacked him; but Aumerle bid him stay his hand, and assured him he had no cause for fear. The old duke was still clamorous at the door, shaking it, and threatening to break it down. Bolingbroke at last opened it, and York entered out of breath and full of fear for the king's life. In explanation of his sudden appearance he gave the king the paper he had snatched from his son and asked him to read it, Aumerle saying the while, "Remember, as you read, your past promise. I repent. Do not read my name there. My heart is not confederate with my hand." His father roared out, "It was, villain, before your hand set it down;" and he explained to the king how he had found the paper in his son's bosom. Bolingbroke was dismayed at the sudden tidings of so dark a conspiracy against his life. "O loyal father of a treacherous son," he began; but he remembered his promise and was willing to excuse the deadly blot in the digressing son because of the abundant goodness of the father.

Just at this same moment the duchess arrived behind the closed doors, crying aloud for entrance. Bolingbroke asked what suppliant this might be, and she replied, "A woman, your aunt, great king; speak with me, pity me!" When the

duchess was admitted she straightway knelt, and beside her knelt Aumerle supplicating for pardon; but York bent the knee opposite to them and prayed against their petition. "Good aunt, stand up," said Bolingbroke; but she would not till pardon were granted; and at last the king, won by her constancy and great love for her son, said, "I pardon him as Heaven shall pardon me." But, for the rest of the conspirators he decreed death, and bid his uncle help to order several powers to Oxford to execute his sentence.

These things and the fears that ever beset a usurping king made Bolingbroke wish for the death of Richard; and though he said no direct word, yet his courtiers and followers might easily see the drift of his thoughts. Some had overheard him say, "Have I no friend who will rid me of this living fear?" and such a hint from royal lips was equal to a command.

Sir Pierce of Exton, one of Bolingbroke's creatures, therefore undertook to relieve his majesty of his enemy. King Richard had been carried to Pomfret Castle and was there imprisoned in the dungeon. One day as he paced deep in thought about his dark cell, the keeper who came daily with his food broke roughly in upon his meditations and asked him if it would please him to fall to upon his meal. Richard commanded him to taste the food first, as was his wont; but the keeper said he dared not, for Sir Pierce of Exton, who lately came from the king, had ordered

the contrary. Hereupon Richard, angered by the many indignities he had suffered, and divining a plot to poison him, fell upon the keeper and beat him roundly. "Help, help, help!" cried the man, and Sir Pierce, followed by his armed servants, came running in. "How now?" said King Richard. "What means death in this rude assault?" and snatching a weapon from one of the servants, he cried, "Villain, your own hand yields the instrument of your death;" upon which he despatched him, and turned to attack another. This one he also killed. But he had scarcely adjusted his sword for a new attack, when Sir Pierce struck him down. "Exton," he said piteously, as his life ebbed away, "your fierce hand has stained the king's own soil with his blood; that hand shall burn in never-quenching fire;" and as the fallen king died, admiration of his valor and remorse for the deed touched the cruel heart of Exton so that he was shaken with grief; but he took up the body of the dead king to bear it away to the living king at Windsor.

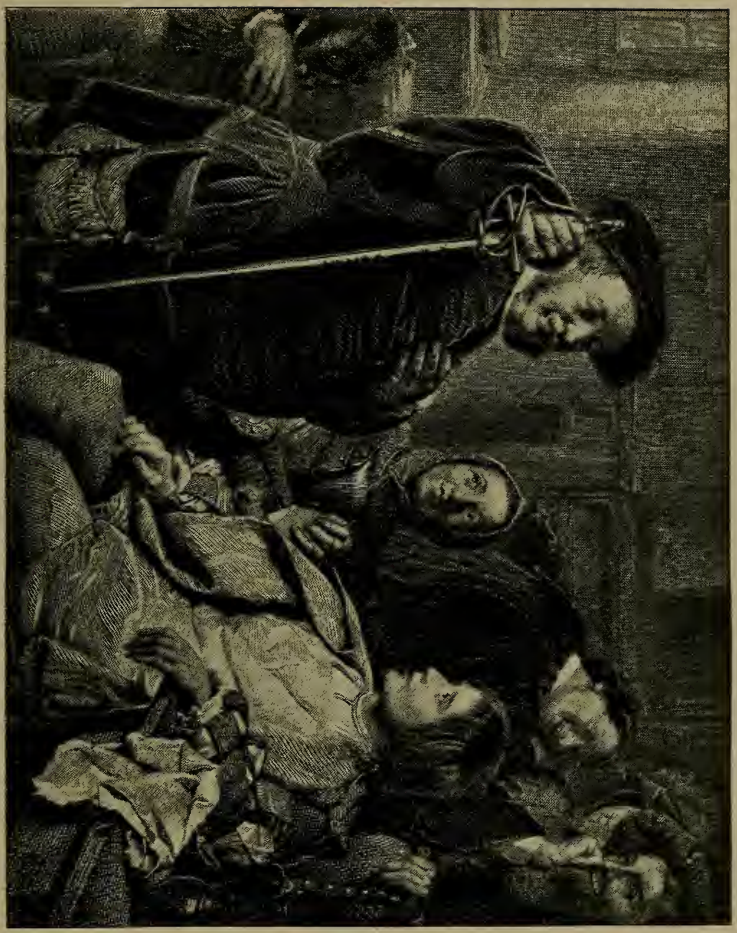
When, in a brief time after, Sir Pierce Exton, followed by his servants bearing Richard's coffin, came solemnly into the chamber where Bolingbroke held court, he was confident of pleasing the king, however much his conscience smote him for his misdeed. "Great king," he said, "within this coffin I present thy buried fear; for herein lies the mightiest of thy great enemies, Richard of Bordeaux." But Sir Pierce had not considered

well the difference between a wish expressed and a wish fulfilled; and how the wrong we desire becomes odious when it covers us with suspicion. Bolingbroke had longed for Richard's death, but he wanted to appear innocent of his taking off. When, therefore, he heard the deed laid thus at his door, he was quick to tell the murderer that he thanked him not, and so, feigning well to be stricken with sorrow, he bade Sir Pierce of Exton to wander forth with Cain through the shade of night and nevermore to show his head.

But to wash the blood from his guilty hands, the king vowed a voyage to the Holy Land; then, marching sadly among his mournful nobles, he followed the untimely bier of Richard to the grave.

KING HENRY IV.—PART I.

KING HENRY IV—PART 1



KING HENRY IV.—PART I.

WHEN King Henry the Fourth was about to prepare for his crusade to the Holy Land, the long-cherished purpose was suddenly interrupted by the news that the noble Mortimer, Earl of March, had been taken by Glendower and his rude Welshmen, and a thousand of his people butchered. This news was surely enough to delay the king, but speedily upon it came tidings that young Harry Percy, called the gallant Hotspur, had met Archibald, the Earl of Douglas, in battle and had defeated him with a great slaughter of his men, capturing, at the same time, Mordake, Earl of Fife, eldest son of Douglas, and the Earls of Athol, Murray, Angus, and Monteith.

In this victory of his subjects the king was entitled to share, and he claimed the noble prisoners of war for his own; but Hotspur, feeling a contempt for the king's foppish messenger, who was, he said, more like a waiting gentlewoman than a lord, and desiring to have from the king, in return for his prisoners, the ransom of his brother-in-law, Mortimer, who was the prisoner of Glendower, evaded

the king's command and did not deliver the captured earls. This vexed the king, who sent for the young warrior and bade him surrender them without delay or suffer his displeasure. But Hotspur would not do this without the promise of Mortimer's release. This the king refused, and desired never again to hear Mortimer's name, for he said he was a traitor who had betrayed his forces into Glendower's hands, for that he had married the Welsh leader's daughter and had gone over to his side. Hotspur denied this charge with all the passion of his nature, and told the king that Mortimer had fought long in deadly single combat with Glendower on the banks of the Severn before he had been overcome. The king said that this was not true, and he was angered deeply by the words of his subject lord, so that he dismissed Hotspur and his father the Earl of Northumberland from his presence, as he had previously dismissed the Earl of Worcester, the young man's uncle; then, followed by his train, he went indignantly away. But Worcester again joined his brother and nephew, to whom he offered to reveal a plot which was aimed against the throne. The young Hotspur strode all the while up and down the chamber, venting an ungovernable fury upon the king, threatening vengeance for Mortimer's fate, and vowing again and again that he would not give up a single Scot if a Scot would save the king's soul. So much did he interrupt Worcester's secret deliverance that the earl was affronted and would

have withheld it; but Northumberland used a father's persuasion to quiet the furious youth, and the plot was finally spoken. It was thus agreed that Hotspur should set free all his Scottish prisoners without ransom, and so win the gratitude of Earl Douglas, who in return should be brought to join with the conspirators, and with Scroop, the Archbishop of York, whose brother had been executed by the king at Bristol; and that these, in turn, should unite with Mortimer. Worcester then said he would steal on to Glendower and Lord Mortimer, in Wales, where the others, with Douglas and their combined forces, should meet him.

Though the king was resolved to have the prisoners and to make young Hotspur respect his royal power, yet he could not but admire the noble courage and warlike skill of the young lord; and these qualities were all the more marked in the king's mind by contrast with the character of his own son, the Prince of Wales. This young prince was given over to low companions and a life of riot among the thieves and rascals of London. He was a handsome youth, fit for the offices of his father's court in manner and education; but report spake ill of his behaviour in the town, and the king was saddened by his evil ways.

The constant associate of the prince was an old knight named Falstaff, who was fat-witted with drinking sack and sleeping upon benches after noon. He had a huge paunch and was most unwieldy in his gait. His speech was sprinkled

thick with oaths and he boasted a vast courage, which ever failed him in time of need.

This Sir John, with Poins, Gadshill, Peto, and Bardolph, gained a dangerous livelihood by robbing travellers on the king's highway as they went to and from London. In such expeditions the prince was sometimes led to take part, from a love of adventure or because, as is the habit with young people who like to indulge their inclinations, he thought that some day he would amend his ways and make all right. I know you all, he would think to himself, and will uphold for a while the unyoked humour of your idleness; but when the time comes I will throw off such loose behaviour, and my reformation shall be all the more goodly because of my faults. But this is a dangerous argument, for few can resist temptation at will, and evil doing is not so easily cast aside as the prince believed.

But there was a highway robbery afoot just at this time, and one day Poins came into the prince's room in the palace, where Prince Hal sat bantering the fat old knight, to ask them to join in the escapade. Good-morrows passed between the gay comrades, and then Poins unfolded to the others his plans for the next morning. There were pilgrims going to Canterbury with rich offerings, he said, and traders riding to London with fat purses. He had provided visors, so that all might conceal their faces, but they could use their own horses. Gadshill would lie in Rochester that night; and

Prince Hal, Falstaff, and the rest should sup on the morrow, after the booty had been taken, in Eastcheap. "If you will go," said he, "I will stuff your purses full of crowns; if you will not, tarry at home and be hanged."

Falstaff was eager for the work in a minute; but Prince Hal, while he did not discountenance it, was more cautious. "Hal, wilt thou make one?" cried the fat knight; but the prince said, "What, I rob? I a thief? not I, by my faith." The knight answered, "There is neither honesty, manhood, nor good-fellowship in thee, nor camest thou of royal blood, if thou darest not stand for ten shillings." But Poins, who had a fine jest in hand, to be played by Prince Hal and himself upon the rest when they had taken the booty, asked Sir John to leave the prince and him alone, for he would lay down such reasons for the adventure that he should surely go with them.

When Falstaff was well out of hearing, Poins drew the prince aside and unfolded his merry plans. He said he had a jest to execute that he could not manage alone, which was that Falstaff, Bardolph, Peto, and Gadshill should rob the men that had been waylaid, but the prince and he would not be there when it was done; then, when these four had the booty, Prince Hal and he should in turn rob them. "But how shall we part with them in setting forth?" asked the prince, beginning to scent the fun. Poins told him that they should set forth before or after the others, appoint

them a place of meeting and fail them. The four would then adventure upon the exploit by themselves, which they would no sooner have achieved than the two conspirators should set upon them. "Aye, but it is likely that they will know us by our horses, by our habits, and by every other appointment," said the prince. "Tut!" answered Poins; "they shall not see our horses, our visors we will change after we leave them, and I have cases of buckram for the nonce, to mask our outward garments." The prince said he doubted they might be too powerful for them; but Poins had well-considered that, and said that, for two of them, he knew them to be as true-bred cowards as ever turned back; and for the third, if he should fight longer than he saw reason, Poins said he would forswear arms. The virtue of the jest would be, said the merry pick-purse, the incomprehensible lies the fat rogue of a knight would tell when they all met at supper. This determined the prince, who loved such mad pranks beyond even reputation, and he told Poins he would go with him. They then bid each other farewell until they should meet the next morning at the appointed place on the road.

All was done on the morrow as Poins had planned. Under cover of the dim light they removed Falstaff's horse, so that he should not have means for retreat, and then they drew aside from the rest and stood close to watch the event. Falstaff was furious when he discovered that his horse had been taken. He called out, "Poins!

Hal! a plague upon you both!" and said he would starve before he would rob a foot farther. He made such a tumult with his curses and short breath that the others grew alarmed, lest the travellers should overhear him, and Poins gave a low whistle of warning. This only enraged him the more, and the prince came forth from hiding and bade him lay his ear close to the ground and listen if he could hear the tread of travellers. "Have you any levers to lift me up again?" asked Sir John. He threatened and cajoled and pleaded for his horse until presently Gadshill arrived, warning them to put on their visors, for there was money of the king's coming down the hill. The prince hurriedly directed that the four should front the carriers in the narrow lane, while he and Poins would walk lower, and, if the carriers escaped from the first encounter they would then light upon them. Gadshill said there were some eight or ten in the party; and Falstaff, whose courage was least active in time of danger, cried, "Zounds! will they not rob us?" "What, a coward, Sir John Paunch?" laughed Prince Hal, while Poins told the fat knight where he might find his horse behind the hedge, bidding him farewell, and urging him to stand fast. The prince and Poins then withdrew down the lane, putting on their buckram disguises as they went.

The travellers came forward in the gray morning light without suspecting danger, when suddenly they were bidden to "Stand!" and the four

thieves leaped out upon them. Falstaff, seeing that they made no attempt to defend themselves, was for striking them down without mercy. "Cut the villains' throats," he cried; "they hate us youth; down with them, fleece them!" and never until the terror-stricken wayfarers were quite relieved of their treasure did he cease to pour upon them a stream of curses and evil names. When they had got all that was to be had, the thieves drove the travellers away and then came back to their rendezvous to make a division of the spoils. Sir John was outspoken in his contempt for the courage of the prince and Poins. "An they be not two arrant cowards, there's no equity stirring," said he, with fine bravado; but just then a voice cried out at his elbow, "Your money!" and the prince and Poins, in their buckram disguises, rushed forth upon the other four. On the instant all were upon their feet and Falstaff, after a blow or two, took to his fat legs with the rest. In their terror they left their booty behind them, and the two conspirators, taking it up, got merrily to horse and bore it away to London.

In the Boar's Head Tavern in Eastcheap, that same night, Prince Hal and Poins sat idling with the tapster, when Falstaff and his three companions came in, as had been appointed.

"Welcome, Jack. Where hast thou been?" said the Prince. "A plague of all cowards," sullenly replied Falstaff, and he called for a cup of sack, which he drank off, exclaiming again and

again, "A plague of all cowards." Then he fell to muttering of villains and cowards and how there lived not three good men unhung in England, and one of them was fat and was grown old. "How now, woolsack? What do you mutter?" asked the prince. But Sir John made no direct answer. "A king's son," murmured he, with a sneer. "If I do not beat thee out of thy kingdom with a dagger of lath, and drive all thy subjects before thee like a flock of geese, I'll never wear hair on my face more. *You* Prince of Wales!" The Prince greeted this sally with a great oath, and wanted to know what was the matter. "Are you not a coward? answer me that; and Poins there?" asked the disgusted knight. The prince said if Sir John called him a coward he would stab him; but the knight, with careless bravado, ordered more sack, still muttering, "A plague of all cowards." At last, pressed by Prince Hal, he told what was the matter, which was that he and his three companions had taken a thousand pounds that morning. "Where is it, Jack? Where is it?" eagerly asked Prince Hal. "Taken from us," said the knight. Then he told how a hundred had fallen upon the four; how he himself was at half-sword with a dozen of them two hours together; how he had escaped by a miracle, and was eight times thrust through the doublet, four through the hose, his buckler was cut through and through, and his sword hacked like a hand-saw. He ended with his denunciation of all cowards, and called upon Gadshill and the

rest to bear witness that he spoke the truth. With much questioning they told the story anew. The four had set upon a dozen, Sir John said sixteen at least, and bound them, and, as they were sharing, some six or seven fresh men set upon them and unbound the travellers they had robbed, who also attacked them. The prince feigned surprise, and asked if they had fought with them all. "All?" said Sir John. "I know not what you call all; but if I fought not with fifty of them I am a bunch of radish." The prince said he prayed Heaven the knight had not murdered some of them; but Falstaff replied that that was past praying for; he had peppered two of them, he was sure: two rogues in buckram suits. "Hal," quoth he, "if I tell thee a lie, call me horse. Thou knowest my old ward; here I lay, and thus I bore my point," and he went through the movements with his sword. "Four rogues in buckram let drive at me." The prince interrupted him. "What, four?" he asked; "you said but two, even now." "Four, Hal; I told thee four," insisted the knight; and Poins, to prolong the fun, supported him; upon which he ran on to seven, and nine, and eleven, until he told how three knaves in Kendal green came at his back in the darkness and let drive at him, "for it was so dark, Hal," said he, "that you could not see your hand." This was a point too much for the prince. "These lies," he said, "are like the father that begets them, gross, open, palpable;" and he told the knight to breathe

awhile, and hear him speak. Then, with a great effort to be grave; he repeated the true story of the morning's adventure, whereupon Sir John, in his most shameless mood, swore that from the first he knew those who had attacked him as well as he who made them. "And was it for me," he asked, "to kill the heir apparent? Should I turn upon the true prince? Why, thou knowest I am as valiant as Hercules, but beware instinct; the lion will not touch the true prince." Thus amid the laughter of his boon fellows this "greasy tallow-ketch," as the prince called him, masked his cowardice, and made ready for a night's carouse.

But just at this moment the hostess of the Boar's Head came in and announced that there was a nobleman of the court at the door, who would speak with Prince Henry, saying he came from his father, the king. The prince told her to give him as much as would make him a royal man and send him back to his mother. Falstaff, learning that he was an old man, asked what did such gravity out of its bed at midnight! and with the prince's consent betook himself below to give the messenger an answer. While he was gone Peto and Bardolph told how the fat rogue had hacked his sword with his dagger, and persuaded them to make their noses bleed by tickling them with spear-grass, that they might stain their garments and swear it was the blood of true men.

Presently Sir John came panting back full of news learned from the king's messenger, Sir John

Bracy. "You must to the court in the morning," he said to the prince, and, half out of breath, told that the mad fellow of the North, Percy; and Glendower; with his son-in-law Mortimer; old Northumberland, and the sprightly Scot, Douglas; Mordake, and Worcester were risen in revolt, and that the king's beard, so he said, was turned white with the tidings.

But even this ill news could not dull the spirits of these gay companions, and they fell to playing in mockery the scene between Prince Hal and his father when they should meet on the morrow. Falstaff and the prince represented the king by turns, while the others sat by hugely enjoying the sport.

In the midst of the carouse, Bardolph, followed by the hostess, broke in crying that the sheriff with a most monstrous watch was at the door. Prince Hal bid Falstaff to hide himself behind the arras, while the rest, he said, should walk above. Then, with only Poins by his side, he made ready to receive the officers of the law. "Now, master sheriff, what is your will with me?" he asked, as the sheriff entered. The answer was that a hue and cry had followed certain men to that house, one of them a gross fat man. The prince said he was not there, for he himself had at that time employed him; but he gave his princely word that he would send him to answer the charges made against him by to-morrow dinner-time. With this assurance the sheriff went out, and when Falstaff

was called forth from behind the arras he was found fast asleep and snorting like a horse. "Search his pockets," said the prince, and, as he expected, good sport lay there. Nothing was found save papers, but one of them was a bill for a capon, sauce, two gallons of sack, anchovies and sack after supper, and a halfpenny-worth of bread. "O monstrous!" roared the prince; "but one halfpenny-worth of bread to this intolerable deal of sack!" Then he directed that the knight should be allowed to sleep where he was till day; but in the morning, as he said, he would go to the court, and he would procure the fat rogue a charge of foot, for they must all to the wars. The money they had taken he said should be paid back with advantage, and he left them with an injunction that they should meet him betimes on the morrow.

When Prince Henry came into the king's presence in the palace the next day, his father met him with words of bitter reproach for the shame and sorrow he had brought upon the royal house. The prince knew within himself how deep were his offences, and how well-merited were the upbraidings of his father; but he had resolved to throw off his evil ways and to assert the noble traits which had always slumbered within him, so that he bore the king's censure with a manly humility, promising amendment and to be more himself thereafter. He vowed to redeem his faults on Percy's head, and in the closing of some glori-

ous day be bold to tell the king, I am your son; for the time would come when he would make that northern youth exchange his famous deeds for his indignities. "I do beseech your majesty may salve the long-grown wounds of my intemperance," he pleaded; and the king was pleased in his heart to find his wayward son of other metal than he had feared.

As they spoke thus together, Sir Walter Blunt came in with the news that Douglas and the English rebels had met at Shrewsbury, and were a mighty and fearful army as ever offered foul play in a state. The king had already heard of this and had sent forward the Earl of Westmoreland, with his own son John, Duke of Lancaster. "On Wednesday next," he said to Prince Henry, "you, Harry, shall set forward; on Thursday, we ourselves will march; our meeting-place shall be Bridgnorth." And having thus laid his plans, the king dismissed the prince and Blunt and himself went to prepare for the coming march to the north.

In the mean time a part of the nobles who were in revolt had, as Blunt reported, encamped with their forces near Shrewsbury; but news came to Hotspur that his father, the Earl of Northumberland, was sick and unable to keep his engagement to meet them with his forces. The impetuous Percy was indignant at his father for thus disconcerting his plans, and broke into a storm of temper, while Worcester, more politic, said that

the quality of the attempt they were engaged in brooked no division, and he greatly feared that the earl's absence would be thought to show his dislike of their proceedings, thus turning the tide of fearful faction away from them, and breeding a question of their cause. But Hotspur could little tolerate the wise balancing of diplomacy, and his mind, which changed in a flash, now altered to the belief that his father's absence might lend a lustre and a larger daring to their enterprise, for men must think that if they could make a bold stand against the king without Northumberland, with him they might overturn the throne.

As Hotspur gave forth these bold sentiments, his cousin, Sir Richard Vernon, arrived with tidings of the march thitherward of all the king's forces. Hotspur inquired where were the nimble-footed madcap the Prince of Wales and his comrades that daffed the world aside and bid it pass. "All furnished, all in arms," answered Vernon. "I saw young Harry with his beaver on, his cuisses on his thighs, gallantly armed, rise from the ground like feathered Mercury and vault with such ease into his seat as if an angel had dropped down from the clouds to turn and wind a fiery Pegasus and witch the world with noble horsemanship." Such praise as this of one he deemed his rival had an unwelcome sound in Percy's ears. He uttered some daring words, then called for his horse, which was to bear him, he said, like a thunderbolt against the bosom of the Prince of

Wales. "Harry to Harry shall meet and never part till one drops down a corse." But Vernon brought other news which was not so inspiring. Worcester, he said, could not gather his forces these fourteen days; and though this to Hotspur had a frosty sound, yet his stout heart ever grew bolder under adversities, and he vowed he could win the day without any of his backward allies.

The king had been swift in his equipment, and was soon on the road to Shrewsbury, whither in a few days he arrived, and encamped at nightfall. Percy and Douglas were eager for the battle, and would have made an attack the very night of his arrival, but the wiser counsels of Worcester and of Vernon were against so rash a measure. Hence arose a debate in the rebel camp that was like to have broken forth into violent discord, when a parley sounded and Sir Walter Blunt presented himself, saying he came a messenger with gracious offers from King Henry if they would vouchsafe him hearing and respect. Hotspur, who was fond of all who possessed strength and prowess, gave the knight a hearty welcome. "Would to God," he said, "you were of our determination, for some of us love you well." But Sir Walter was loyal to his king and hoped Heaven might keep him always against rebellion. He said King Henry desired to know the nature of their griefs, and why they broke the civil peace with such bold hostility; for if his majesty had in any way forgot their deserts he would with all speed grant their

desires, and pardon them and all others whom they had misled into revolt.

Hotspur's family had, however, suffered too much ingratitude at the hands of King Henry to put faith in his offers of reconciliation now that they stood in open warfare against him. When the king had landed in England from exile, and affected only to desire a restoration of his rights and possessions as Duke of Lancaster, they had rallied to his aid and had helped to bring King Richard to acknowledge his claims; and now, when through their support this Bolingbroke had come to be king, he had forgot his benefactors; had suffered their kinsman March, who in very deed was King Richard's rightful heir, to be imprisoned without ransom in Wales; had disgraced Hotspur in his happy victories; rated his uncle from the council-board; dismissed his father from court; broken oath on oath and committed wrong on wrong. Thus the young Percy stormed, and Blunt asked, "Shall I return this answer to the king?" but Hotspur said no, for he and his commanders would withdraw a while for counsel, and Sir Walter should go back, and in the morning his uncle Worcester should take a reply to the king. Then Hotspur bade Sir Walter farewell, and they parted for the night.

On the morrow Worcester presented himself in the royal camp, where again King Henry made offer of pardon and grace; but if Hotspur would not yield he threatened rebuke and dread correc-

tion, whereupon he dismissed the earl from his presence and would not hear a reply. But Worcester feared that if his cousin Percy should accept the king's terms and make peace, there would be great danger to his house, for it was not possible, he thought, that King Henry should keep his word of loving them. He broached these suspicions to Sir Richard Vernon, who accompanied him, and said his nephew must not know of the liberal offer of the king, for if he accepted it they would all be undone. When, therefore, they came up with Hotspur, his uncle told him that the king would bid him battle without delay, and the young warrior, rejoicing at the news, bid Douglas release the hostage and send by him a defiance to the king. While the brave Scot was gone on this errand, Hotspur questioned his uncle more closely, but Worcester concealed the king's intentions and made him appear to seek their destruction.

Presently Douglas came back, crying, "Arm, gentlemen; to arms! I have thrown a brave defiance in King Henry's teeth;" whereupon the rebel chiefs began to look to their weapons and to gather their forces for the approaching battle.

Among the captains of the king's army was Sir John Falstaff, who had for lieutenant Peto. His company was made up of the refuse of the town, and he hoped he might be a soused gurnet if he were not ashamed of his soldiers. "I have misused the king's press wantonly," said he. "I have got, in exchange of a hundred and fifty

soldiers, three hundred and odd pounds. I press me none but good householders, yeomen's sons; inquire me out contracted bachelors, such as had been asked twice on the bans: such a commodity of warm slaves as had as lief hear the old boy as a drum. I pressed me none but such toasts and butter, with hearts in their bellies no bigger than pin's heads, and they have bought out their services, and now my whole charge consists of ancients, corporals, lieutenants, gentlemen of companies, slaves as ragged as Lazarus in the painted cloth, where the glutton dogs kissed his sores; and such as, indeed, were never soldiers, but discarded unjust serving men, younger sons to younger sons, revolted tapsters, and ostlers tradefallen: the cankers of a calm world and a long peace. A mad fellow met me on the way and told me I had unloaded all the gibbets and pressed the dead bodies into service. No eye hath seen such scarecrows." Thus he ambled on in his ponderous and half-drunken voice, for he had spent the proceeds of his dishonesty in sack, and when the supply ran low sent Bardolph on to the next town for more; and he vowed he would not march through Coventry with his ragged command to be disgraced by them, for there was but a shirt and a half in all the company, and the half was two napkins tacked together and thrown over the shoulders like a herald's coat without sleeves; and the shirt was stolen from my host of Saint Albans or the red-nosed inn-keeper of Daventry.

As Falstaff and his beggarly troops approached Coventry, Prince Henry overtook them, crying, "How now, blown Jack, how now?" and he bid Sir John to make haste, for Percy was already in the field. As well as he might, with such a rascally following, the fat knight made his way to Shrewsbury, and led his ragamuffins into the fight, where they were peppered until there were not three of the hundred and fifty alive. The knight himself, by reason of a prudent expenditure of courage, went unhurt, but he was mortally afraid of the shot, and crept out of its reach whenever he could decently do so. Thus prowling about the field, he found the body of Sir Walter Blunt, who had fallen in combat with Douglas, the Scot taking him to be the king himself, because he wore a suit of armour like Henry's own, which several other knights had also done to protect the king against those who should aim especially at his life.

As Falstaff ruminated over the body of the dead warrior, Prince Henry came up in search of a sword. "What?" he cried, "do you stand idle here when many a nobleman whose death is unrevenged lies stark and stiff under the hoofs of vaunting enemies?" Then he demanded Falstaff's sword, who asked for leave to breathe a while, for, he said, Turk Gregory never did such deeds in arms as he had done that day, for he had slain Percy himself. "He is living to kill thee; but, prithee, lend me thy sword," answered the prince. Falstaff said that if Percy were in-

deed alive he would keep his sword; but he offered Prince Hal his pistol. "What, is it in the case?" asked the prince, for Sir John had handed him a case-bottle. "Ay, Hal," he said; "'tis hot, 'tis hot; there's that within will sack a city." The prince drew out the bottle, which at another time he would have taken as a merry jest, and, frowning upon the knight, threw it at him and rode swiftly away to find the king. When he came up with him, King Henry was alarmed because his son was wounded and bleeding. He bid him withdraw from the fight, and told John, his brother, to go with him; but the younger son said he would not unless he bled too, whereupon the king directed Westmoreland to lead Prince Hal to his tent. "Lead me, my lord?" proudly said the prince. "I do not need your help. Heaven forbid a shallow scratch should drive the Prince of Wales from such a field as this!"

As they stood thus in colloquy the Douglas approached, and, seeing this time the real king and supposing him to be another knight in disguise, he said, "What art thou that counterfeit'st the person of a king?"

"The king himself," answered King Henry, and he fixed his weapon for the attack, bidding Douglas to defend himself. The Scot still doubted the king's identity, but he acknowledged that the knight bore himself like a king; whereupon they met hand to hand, and presently the king was like to have been wounded; but Prince Henry, who stood

watchfully by, saw his father's danger, and, in spite of his own wounds, took the fight upon himself. So bravely and so mightily did he oppose the Douglas, that in a brief space he put him to flight. Then he turned to his father, saying, "Cheerily, my lord; how fares your grace?" The king was unharmed; but was touched deeply by his son's devotion and prowess. "You have redeemed your lost opinion and shown that you value my life," he said. Prince Henry replied that they did him too much injury that ever said he desired the king's death; and thus by courage and devotion the wayward son atoned for a misspent youth.

The king parted from him now, for it became necessary to look to his forces; and just at the self-same moment Hotspur rode up in search of the Prince of Wales. "If I mistake not," he said, "thou art Harry Monmouth?" And when Prince Henry acknowledged that he was, Hotspur proudly told him that he was Harry Percy. The prince called him a valiant rebel, and said that one England could not brook a double reign of two such warriors. "Nor shall it," said Hotspur, "for the hour is come to end the one of us!" With this they fell to combat, and just as the fight began Falstaff came up panting forth encouragement for the prince; but hot in pursuit was Douglas, who at once engaged the terrified knight, giving him not even time enough to run away. With his usual prudence in face of danger,

Sir John fell down after a pass or two, and pretended to be dead; and beside him presently fell Hotspur, mortally wounded by the prince. With great-hearted words of courage and regret the young Percy expired, while Prince Henry bent over him proud of his victory but sad for the deed which had deprived the earth of so valiant a gentleman, whose body, he said, had contained a spirit which found a kingdom too small a bound.

As he ruminated thus, Prince Hal's eye fell upon the form of Falstaff, lying near by, and he was much moved to see his old acquaintance stretched out in death. "Poor Jack, farewell!" he said. "I could have better spared a better man." Then, as the battle still raged, the prince could not stay to mourn, but hastened away; and as soon as he was well out of sight and hearing, Sir John got slowly upon his fat legs, muttering curses upon Earl Douglas and excuses for his own cowardice. He believed, he said, that the better part of valour is discretion, and as he feared this Hotspur who lay at his feet might be counterfeiting like himself, he stabbed him to make sure of his death. Then he lifted the body on his back and stumbled off under the great load.

Presently he came up with Prince Henry and his brother Prince John. "Did you not tell me this fat man was dead?" asked John; and Prince Hal answered that he had seen him dead, breathless and bleeding on the ground; then, addressing Falstaff as a spectre, he said, "Art thou alive? or

is it phantasy that plays upon our eyesight?" "If I be not Jack Falstaff," answered the unmistakable voice, "then I am a Jack;" whereupon he threw down the body of Hotspur, saying, "There is Percy: if your father will do me any honour, so; if not, let him kill the next Percy himself." He looked, he said, to be either earl or duke for his deed of prowess; and in all things took to himself the honour of having slain the leader of the rebels. "Why, Percy I killed myself and saw thee dead," said the prince; but even this did not disconcert Sir John. "Didst thou?" he asked. "Lord, lord, how the world is given to lying. I grant I was down and out of breath, and so was he; but we rose both at an instant and fought a long hour by Shrewsbury clock. I'll take it upon my oath I gave him this wound in the thigh. If the man were alive and would deny it, I would make him eat a piece of my sword."

But the prince awoke at last to the humour of the thing, and told the knight to come along and bring his luggage nobly on his back. As Sir John again shouldered the Percy's body, a retreat sounded, and the two princes hurried away to see what friends were living and dead. Falstaff plodded on, muttering that he meant to have reward, and that then he would grow great and grow less, for he would purge and leave sack and live cleanly as a nobleman should do.

The king's forces had won the day, and among

his prisoners were Earl Worcester and Sir Richard Vernon, whom he ordered at once to be put to death. Lord Douglas, when he saw the fortunes of the day quite turned from him, fled with his forces, and falling, was so bruised that the pursuers captured him. Prince Henry had placed him in his tent, and now prayed the king that he might dispose of him; and when the king granted his request, the noble prince gave Douglas his freedom without ransom, for, as he said, the Scot's valour, shown upon their crests that day, had taught him how to cherish such high deeds.

The king then divided his forces, Prince John and Westmoreland going towards York against the Earl of Northumberland and Archbishop Scroop, while himself and Prince Henry went towards Wales to fight with Glendower and the Earl of March; and thus ended the well-fought day of Shrewsbury, and with it the life of the noble but too impetuous Hotspur.

KING HENRY IV.—PART II.

WHEN the news of King Henry's victory over Hotspur and his allies at Shrewsbury reached the ears of the Earl of Northumberland, the aged nobleman was overcome by grief to hear of the death of his valorous son ; but he was alarmed, as well, for his own safety. For with the tidings of the ruin of his son's cause came a warning that the king's forces were marching upon him and upon Archbishop Scroop of York, because they had been secretly engaged to help the younger Percy in his venture against the crown. In the midst of his sorrows, therefore, the old earl was compelled to prepare for battle with the royal army, and this he set about with all haste. But, as he was on the point of starting out to join the archbishop, his wife and his daughter-in-law, the widow of Hotspur, pleaded with him to seek safety in flight, and rather to dissemble with his fellow-plotters as he had found it in his heart to do with his own son, than to venture upon open hostility with the king. This the earl finally decided to do, and he departed

for Scotland, there to abide until better days should permit him to return in peace.

In the mean time the Archbishop of York had also heard of the king's victory at Shrewsbury, and had called upon his allies to join him in his cause against the royal powers. In a room of his palace he met Lord Hastings, Lord Bardolph, Lord Mowbray, and other enemies of the king, and counselled with them how best to encounter the victorious forces of Prince John and the Earl of Westmoreland which were marching rapidly against them. The muster of the rebels amounted to five-and-twenty thousand men of choice; but their supplies lived largely in the hope of great Northumberland, whose bosom, said Lord Hastings, burned with an incensed fire of injuries. Lord Bardolph questioned whether their present forces might hold up head without the earl, and his judgment was that they should not step too far till they had Northumberland's assistance by the hand, else, he said, they would be like one who draws the model of a house beyond his power to build it, and who, when half through, gives over the work and leaves it a naked subject to the weeping clouds and waste for churlish winter's tyranny. But Lord Hastings was more of the temper of Hotspur, and was for proceeding without the tardy earl; for, said he, the unfirm king has divided his force in three heads: one against the French, one against Glendower, and the third must take up us, and thus divided we may hope to defeat him. The archbishop, who was

also anxious for the attack because the king had executed his brother, supported the opinion of Lord Hastings and said there was little danger that King Henry should draw his several strengths together and come against them in his full power. "Let us on," he urged. "The commonwealth is sick of its choice of Bolingbroke for king, for a giddy and unsure foundation is his who builds upon the vulgar heart." Then he broke forth in a lament upon the unstable times which had desired King Richard's death but were now enamoured of his grave; and in such a strain he won his allies to take up the fight against Prince John's approaching forces without the aid of Northumberland.

While this was taking place in the north, the king and the Prince of Wales had returned to London with their followers, among whom was Sir John Falstaff, now more than ever given over to boastfulness and brawling because of his deeds in the battle of Shrewsbury. The king was sick; but the prince longed again for his old boon companions of Eastcheap, and he confessed to Poins that though it showed vilely in him yet, in truth, he desired small beer. "How ill it follows," said Poins, "after you have laboured so hard you should talk so idly. Tell me, how many good young princes would do so, their fathers lying so sick as yours is?" The prince confessed that he could weep for his father, that his heart bled inwardly for him, but that if he gave way to his sadness he would only be misunderstood and called hypocrite; and

he put on his gay humour more to disguise his sorrow than to indulge his fancy.

As they spoke together thus in London streets, Bardolph and Sir John's page came up, and they learned from them of the old knight's doings. He supped, said they, at the accustomed place in Eastcheap and in the old vagabond company. "Sup any women with him?" asked Prince Hal; and the page answered, "None but old Mistress Quickly and Mistress Doll Tear-sheet." Then, in his love for such free sport, the prince proposed that Poins and he should steal upon them at supper. They vowed Bardolph to secrecy and the prince gave the knavish boy a crown for his silence; and, parting from them, they considered how they might see Falstaff bestow himself that night in his true colours, and not themselves be seen. "Put on two leather jerkins and aprons and wait upon him at his table as drawers," suggested Poins. This pleased Prince Hal's mad humour, and he said, though he descended from a prince to a peasant, the transformation should be made, for in everything the purpose must weigh with the folly.

In the Boar's Head Tavern in Eastcheap that same night Sir John took his ease with the hostess and Mistress Doll Tear-sheet, and as they came in from the room where they had supped, the drawer told the knight that Pistol was below and would speak with him. Mistress Tear-sheet bid them let him not come thither, for he was the foul-mouth'dst rogue in England and a swaggering rascal; upon

which Mistress Quickly also objected, for she said she could have no swaggerers there, and she ordered the drawers to shut the door. Falstaff said, "Dost thou hear, hostess? it is mine ancient;" but she would not listen to him, and continued to rail against all swaggerers. "He's no swaggerer, hostess; a tame cheater, he; you may stroke him as gently as a puppy greyhound: he will not swagger with a Barbary hen, if her feathers turn back in any show of resistance," quoth the knight; whereupon Mistress Quickly was instantly mollified, for she said she would bar no honest man nor cheater from her house; but she could not abide a swaggerer.

Pistol was now allowed to come up, and, "Save you, Sir John," said he as he entered; but instantly he fell into hard words with Mistress Doll which anon became so high that Bardolph and the old knight himself were powerless to keep peace between them. "Thrust him down-stairs; I cannot endure such a fustian rascal," cried Doll, and all together tried to put him out of the room; but he drew his sword upon Bardolph, and would have wounded him had not Sir John drawn and crossed blades with him and driven him away. The knight came puffing back like a great hero and was caressed by both the women for his bravery. "A rascal! to brave me," he said, looking fiercely around him; while Mistress Doll called him endearingly her sweet little rogue, and wiped his sweating face. "Thou art as valorous as Hector of Troy, worth

five of Agamemnon, and ten times better than the nine worthies," said she; but Sir John could only mutter, "A rascally slave! I will toss the rogue in a blanket!"

At this moment the music came in and Falstaff bid them play, while Doll sat on his knee and he still cursed Pistol for a bragging slave. "The rogue fled from me like quicksilver," quoth he; and Doll said Sir John followed him like a church. "When wilt thou leave off fighting and dram-drinking and begin to patch up thine old body for heaven?" she asked. He bid her keep peace and not speak like a death's head; and at this same time Prince Hal and Poins, disguised like drawers, came in to spy upon their doings. "Sirrah," asked Doll, "what humour is the prince of?" Falstaff protested he was a good, shallow young fellow who would have made a good pantler, or would have chipped bread well. "They say Poins hath a good wit," quoth she; but Falstaff was in no humour to allow as much. "He a good wit? hang him, baboon!" he muttered, "his wit is as thick as Tewksbury mustard; there is no more conceit in him than in a mallet." Doll asked why, then, the prince loved him so; and the jealous old knight said it was because their legs were both of a bigness, and he played at quoits well, and ate conger and fennel, and jumped upon joint-stools, and did all the rest of the mad antics of his kind, for the prince himself was just such another." This was more than Prince Hal and Poins could bear.

They whispered together menacingly. "Would not this knave have his ears cut off?" muttered the prince; and Poins offered to beat him. But just then Falstaff, in a melting mood, said, "Kiss me, Doll," and the eavesdroppers stayed their hands to watch the sport. "Thou wilt forget me when I am gone," said the knight. "By my troth," she answered, "thou'lt set me weeping if thou sayest so." Then Sir John called for some sack and Prince Henry and Poins bustled forward crying, "Anon, anon, sir." Falstaff discovered them on the instant. "Ha! a bastard son of the king's," he cried. "And art not thou Poins his brother?" he asked of Poins. "Why, thou globe of sinful continents, what a life dost thou lead?" said the prince. Sir John told him a better than he, for he was a gentleman and the prince but a drawer. Then the old knight, who really loved Prince Hal, bid him a hearty welcome back to London; but Mistress Doll, on whom he leaned his fat hand as he spoke, cast it off, saying that she scorned him; for the truth was she had set her cap for his betters, and was vexed thus to be caught by them in the old knight's company. The prince accused him of speaking vilely of him; but Sir John, with his accustomed impudence, explained that he had dispraised him and Poins before the wicked that the wicked might not fall in love with them. "In which doing," he said, "I have done the part of a careful friend and a true subject, and thy father is to give me thanks for it."

But, now there was a loud knock at the door, and when it was opened Peto entered breathless with news. He told the prince that the king had arrived at Westminster and that twenty weak and wearied posts had ridden from the north. As he came along he said he had met a dozen captains, bareheaded, sweating, knocking at the taverns and asking every one for Sir John Falstaff.

The prince was abashed to hear such tidings: they brought him back to the realities of kingship. "By heavens, Poins," said he, "I feel me much to blame, so idly to profane the precious time." Then he called for his sword and cloak, and crying, "Falstaff, good-night," hurried away, followed by Poins, Peto, and Bardolph. Presently Bardolph came back with a command for Sir John to repair to court directly. "A dozen captains stay at door for you," he told the knight, and Falstaff, bidding his page pay the musicians, turned to bid farewell to Mistress Tear-sheet and the hostess. "You see, my good wenches, how men of merit are sought after," said he; then, retiring down stairs, called, "Farewell, farewell," and, with Bardolph at his heels, was gone.

The king was bowed down with the load of his triple wars, and found no rest through the weary nights. He wandered till dawn about his palace invoking the gentle goddess of sleep, but she refused him her balm of forgetfulness. Nature's soft nurse, he called her, and many another fair name, and asked how he had frighted her that

she would no more weigh down his eyelids. Rather, he said, she would lie in smoky cribs and stretch upon uneasy pallets, hushed by buzzing night-flies, than in the perfumed chambers of the great, under canopies of costly state and lulled with sounds of sweetest melody. "Wilt thou," he murmured in his sore need, "seal up the ship-boy's eyes upon the high and giddy mast, and rock his brains in cradle of the rude imperious surge, and in the visitation of the winds, who take the ruffian billows by the top, curling their monstrous heads and hanging them with deafening clamours in the slippery clouds that, with the hurly, death itself awakes? Canst thou, O partial sleep! give thy repose to the wet sea-boy in an hour so rude, and in the calmest and stillest night, with all appliances and means to boot, deny it to a king?" His question was answered by his own unrest, and he wailed aloud such a truth as we learn by hard experience: "Uneasy lies the head that wears a crown."

As the king, thus disturbed in mind, paced to and fro, there came to him the Earl of Warwick, for whom he had sent, bidding him good-morrow. "Is it good-morrow?" he asked. Warwick told him it was past one o'clock. King Henry said, wearily, "Why, then good-morrow," and asked if his lordship had read over the letters he had sent him, for from them he would perceive how foul was the body of the kingdom, what rank diseases grew upon it, and what danger was near its heart.

Warwick strove to soothe his sickened fancy by telling him how easily all might be restored with good advice and a little medicine; but the king was distraught in body and in soul, and evil imaginings blurred his vision. He recalled the love between King Richard and Northumberland, and how, in two years after, they were at war; how this same Percy that now plotted against him was eight years ago the man nearest his soul. "But you were by, cousin Nevil," he said to Warwick, "when Richard, with his eyes brimful of tears, being checked and rated by Northumberland, did speak these words, now proved a prophecy: 'Northumberland, thou ladder by which my cousin Bolingbroke ascends my throne, the time shall come when that foul sin, gathering head, shall break into corruption;'—and so he went on foretelling this same time's condition, and the division of our amity."

Warwick pointed out that King Richard might well have guessed that great Northumberland, being then false to him, would, of that seed, grow to a greater falseness. "Are these things then necessities?" exclaimed the king. "Then let us meet them like necessities. They say the bishop and Northumberland are fifty thousand strong." The earl answered that it could not be, and urged the king to go to bed, assuring him that the powers he had already sent forth would bring this prize in very easily. To comfort him the more, he told him that he had received certain tidings

that Glendower was dead. Then the king took his advice and retired, saying, to ease his woes, that if these wars were once over, he would away upon his crusade to the Holy Land.

In the mean time, Sir John Falstaff had set out upon an errand to Lord John of Lancaster in the north, mustering soldiers for the king's army as he proceeded. When he reached Gloucestershire he found the justice, Shallow by name, to be an old friend of his school-days in London, who boasted that he had known the fat knight when he was plain Jack Falstaff, and a page to Thomas Mowbray, Duke of Norfolk. Sir John's welcome was a warm one, for his martial fame had preceded him, and Justice Shallow was proud to own so notable an acquaintance; but the knight was impatient of such country manners as Shallow and his kinsman Silence greeted him with, and he asked abruptly if they had provided him with half a dozen of sufficient men? "Marry, have we, sir," quoth Shallow, and Sir John sat down on the green before the justice's house to examine them. The roll was brought, the names called one by one, and Mouldy, Shadow, Feeble, Peter Bull-caff, and Wart were brought up in turn. Four were to be chosen out of the five, but Wart, because, as Sir John said, his apparel was built upon his back and his whole frame stood upon pins, was rejected as soon as he appeared, while the others were made to await a final choice until Shallow and Falstaff had dined. When the jus-

tice and the knight had gone in to dinner, Bull-calf implored Bardolph to stand his good friend, offering him ten shillings if he would secure his release. Bardolph indignantly refused the bribe, and when Mouldy came to him with an offer of forty, he likewise told him to stand aside. But when the meal was through, Sir John came forth again full of Shallow's good cheer and ready to finish the choice. "Come, sir," said he; "which men shall I have?" Bardolph drew him aside, whispering, "I have three pound to free Mouldy and Bull-calf." This turned the current of the knight's decision, and when again Justice Shallow asked him which four he would have, he answered, "Do you choose for me." "Marry, then," said Shallow, "Mouldy, Bull-calf, Feeble, and Shadow." But Sir John, with bold disregard of the king's interest, said, "For you, Mouldy, stay at home till you are past service; and for your part, Bull-calf, grow till you come into it; I will none of you." Shallow was astonished at the knight's choice, and he told him not to do himself wrong, for these two he rejected were his likeliest men, and he would have him served with the best. But with his wonted impudence, Falstaff maintained that it was not the limb, the thewes, the stature, bulk, and big assemblance of a man he desired, but the spirit. "Oh, give me the spare men," quoth he, "and spare me the great ones."

Thus did this jolly vagabond make a disrepu-

table living by selling what was left of his honour and degrading the king's forces with beggarly recruits. Having spent the day with the justice, drunk of his cellar, and fed of his best dishes, Falstaff departed with his tattered followers, vowing he would be acquainted with Shallow again if he returned that way, and that it would go hard but he would snap at him.

Sir John journeyed on to the north and joined the prince in time to take part in the pursuit of the rebel army, which fled before the king's forces through Yorkshire. Having been overtaken by the prince and the Earl of Westmoreland in a forest of Yorkshire, the archbishop and his allies consented to a parley, and finally agreed to accept the proffer of peace made in the king's name on condition that all their grievances should be redressed. The conference took place in sight of the opposing armies, and on the instant that the amicable terms were settled, Lord Hastings bid an officer hurry away to the archbishop's forces, to proclaim the peace and to pay and dismiss them. Prince John, on his part, sent the Lord Westmoreland to discharge his army, and at the same time proposed to the archbishop that their respective trains should march by them, so that they might peruse the men they should have coped with. This the archbishop asked Lord Hastings to order, and as he went upon the errand, Westmoreland came back. "Now, cousin," said Prince John, "wherefore stands our army

still?" The earl answered that the leaders, having charge from the prince to stand, would not go off until they heard him speak. "They know their duties," said the dissembling prince; but Lord Hastings came in at this instant, announcing that the archbishop's army had dispersed already, like a school broke up, each hurrying towards his home and sporting-place.

Then said Westmoreland, "Good tidings, my Lord Hastings, for the which I do arrest thee, traitor, of high treason;" and in this summary and dishonourable manner were all the rest of the rebel lords attached for capital treason and hurried off to execution, the prince justifying his unrighteous device on the ground that it was practised against those unlawfully in arms against the king; but he put aside the truth that evil done to the evil-doer is an equal hurt to him who does it and to him who suffers.

In the pursuit which followed, Sir John Falstaff had the good fortune, which ever seemed to follow his undeserving steps, to fall in with a gentleman of the rebel army named Sir John Colevile of the dale. When this brave knight knew whom he had encountered he was content to give himself up, and very bravely did Falstaff lead him his captive to where stood Prince John and his leaders. "Now, Falstaff," said the prince, "where have you been all this while? When everything is ended you come up." The fat knight put on a look of injured virtue. He said he never yet knew but

rebuke and check were the reward of valour; for here, he had foundered nine-score and odd posts, and had come in thus travel-tainted, when, in his pure and immaculate valour, he had taken Sir John Colevile of the dale, a most furious knight and valorous enemy. He prayed that he might have right done him, and that desert should mount. "Thine's too heavy to mount," laughed the prince; but he, as well as his brother, was fond of the bragging old rascal, whose falsehoods were too plain to do much harm to any but himself, and at last he bid the knight farewell, promising, when he reached London, to speak better of him than he deserved.

The king was still weak; but with a characteristic energy was making plans for his crusade when the rebels should have come underneath the yoke of government. One day, as he stood among his sons and nobles in Westminster palace, he noticed the absence of Prince Henry, and asked where he was. Prince Humphrey answered that he thought his brother had gone to the hunt; but the truth was that Prince Hal was that day dining in Eastcheap with Poins and his other continual followers. When the king learned this it grieved him much, and he lamented upon the unguided days and rotten times his subjects should look upon when he was sleeping with his ancestors. "For," said he, "when his headstrong riot has no curb, when rage and hot blood are his counsellors, when means and lavish manners meet together, with what wings

shall his affections fly towards fronting peril and opposed decay!" Lord Warwick tried to pacify the king with hopeful words, saying the prince but studied his companions, like a strange tongue wherein it is needful that the most immodest word be looked upon and learned; but the king said, sadly, "'Tis seldom when the bee doth leave her comb in the dead carrion." What more he would have said was interrupted by the arrival of Westmoreland with news of Prince John's victory in the north, and this turned the king's sadness to a sudden cheer. "Oh, Westmoreland, thou art a summer bird, which ever in the haunch of winter sings the lifting up of day," said he; and, as he ceased, Lord Harcourt entered, bringing the tidings that Earl Northumberland and Lord Bardolph, with a great power of English and Scots, had been overthrown by the Sheriff of Yorkshire.

But, as is often the case with one of unsound health, the great joy which the king felt upon hearing this good news overstrained his feeble spirit, and, suddenly calling for help, he fell swooning into the arms of his sons and nobles. The incessant care and labour of his mind had wrought the walls of flesh that confined it so thin that life looked through. The river Thames had also, to the thinking of the superstitious times, given its warning of the king's death, for it had flowed thrice with no ebb between, as it had done a little time before King Edward, his grandsire, had sickened and died.

But presently King Henry recovered and asked to be taken up and borne thence into some other chamber. This was softly done, and he was placed upon the bed, saying, as he lay at rest, "Let there be no noise made, my gentle friends, unless some dull and favourable hand will whisper music to my weary spirit;" and when the music was brought as the king desired, with a languid motion he pointed to his pillow and bid them lay his crown upon it. His eye was hollow and he was much changed, and those who stood about his bed bent pitiful looks upon him, thus failing to see Prince Henry, who now entered seeking his brother the Duke of Clarence. "How now?" asked the prince, as he beheld the weeping faces; "rain within doors and none abroad!" Then, seeing his father, he questioned, with surprise, "How doth the king?" "Exceeding ill," he was told; and he thought to restore him with the good news from the north, which King Henry had already heard to his cost; but they warned him that his father was disposed to sleep, and desired him to withdraw into the other room, to which he answered that he would sit rather, and watch by the king's bedside.

When all had retired but himself, Prince Henry saw that the crown lay upon his father's pillow, and he wondered why, being so troublesome a bed-fellow, it was allowed to rest there. "O polished perturbation! golden care! that keep'st the ports of slumber open wide to many a watchful night," murmured the prince, touched into graver thoughts

by grief for his own waywardness and his father's threatened death; and he continued to pour forth words of sadness and tenderness for his dear father, saying that his due from him had been tears and heavy sorrows of the blood which he would pay plenteously; but that the king's due to his son was this imperial crown upon the pillow, and then, scarcely heeding what he did, he placed the crown upon his brow, vowing that Heaven should guard it, and though the whole world's strength were put into one giant arm, it should not force the lineal honour from him. Then, with the crown still upon his head, he rose and went into the next room; but at this same moment the king awoke, and, finding himself deserted, called to his sons; asking why they left him there alone. They hastily came in and told him the prince, their brother, was there when they withdrew; and King Henry eagerly asked where he was, saying he would see him at once. Seeing that the door was open through which Prince Henry had gone, they went in search of him; while the king discovering the absence of the crown, cried out that the prince had taken it away. "Is he so hasty that he doth suppose my sleep a death?" he asked, and fell to chiding at his filial ingratitude. Lord Warwick came back anon, saying he had found the prince in the next room washing his gentle cheeks with kindly tears. "But wherefore did he take away the crown?" insisted the king; and Prince Henry, entering now, said he never thought to hear his father speak again, which

words King Henry misconceived, for he thought they were meant in disappointment that he lived, rather than in their true sense of sorrow that he had been so ill. "I stay too long by thee, I weary thee," he said. "Oh, foolish youth! you seek the greatness that will overwhelm you;" and in weariness of spirit he accused his son of stealing that which, after some few hours, would have been his without offence. The prince's life, he said, did manifest that he loved his father not, and he would have him die assured of it. Thus, with these hard words, which were only in part deserved for the prince's heart was true though his loose deeds belied it, did the dying sovereign chide his humbled son; and he railed on, prophesying the ruin of all he had built with kingly policy and power and foretelling of the riot which, upon the accession of the prince, would overtake and turn to a wilderness his poor kingdom sick with civil blows.

At last Prince Henry, who had silently taken all with bowed head, knelt at his father's bedside and said that but for his tears, which were moist impediments unto his speech, he would have forestalled that dear and deep rebuke before it was spoken. Then he placed the crown again on the pillow and called Heaven to witness that when he came in and found no course of breath in his majesty, that his heart was struck cold, and he told the king how he had upbraided the crown, and, even while accusing it, had put it on his head to try with it, as with an enemy that had murdered

his father, the quarrel of a true inheritor; but if in the least degree it did infect his blood with joy, or if any vain spirit of his gave entertainment to its might, he prayed Heaven forever to keep it from his head and to make him the poorest vassal that with awe and terror knelt to it.

So earnest and so sincere were the prince's words that King Henry believed them to be true, and he was rejoiced to find his son so unlike the prodigal he had feared him to be. He bid him come close and sit upon his bed to hear the very latest counsel that ever he should breathe. "Heaven knows," he said, "by what by-paths and indirect crooked ways I met this crown, and I myself know how troublesome it sat upon my head;" yet he predicted that to his son it should descend with better quiet, for it seemed in the father an honour snatched with boisterous hand; but what in him was purchased, he said, should fall upon his son in a fairer sort. Then he revealed to Prince Henry that his purpose to lead out many to the Holy Land was planned lest lying still they might look too near unto his state; and he advised the young prince to busy giddy minds with foreign quarrels, that by such action he might waste the memory of the former days.

But the king's voice grew faint now and he moaned that strength of speech was utterly denied him; yet he could not forbear to pray Heaven's forgiveness for the way in which he came by the crown. "My gracious liege, you won it, wore it,

kept it, and gave it me, and my possession must be plain and right," said the prince; wherefore he swore to maintain it against the world.

At this moment the young princes and Lord Warwick came into the chamber, and the king turned to his lordship, asking if any particular name belonged to the lodging where he had first swooned. He was told that it was called Jerusalem; and he cried, "Laud be to Heaven, for even there my life must end." It had been prophesied to him many years, he said, that he should not die but in Jerusalem, and he had vainly supposed the prophecy to refer to the Holy Land; but now he bid his sons and nobles bear him into that chamber, for the fulfilment had come, and in that Jerusalem should Harry die.

When the news went abroad that the king was dead much consternation was felt among lords and commons that the new king should be no other than the idle and incorrigible young prince who had caused his royal father so much shame. But above all others was the chief justice alarmed, for he had boldly sentenced the prince to imprisonment for assaulting him in his court, and he expected no mercy now that the protecting arm of King Henry was removed. The service that he truly did the king's life had left him open to all injuries.

As the chief justice and Lord Warwick spoke together of this in the palace one day, the new king's three brothers approached, and his lordship wished with a sigh that the living Harry had the

temper of even the worst of these. He thought him to be the lawless youth he seemed, and was not wise enough to discover the nobler nature which lurked beneath the prince's assumed recklessness. The princes spoke sadly of the change in the chief justice's fortunes, and the Duke of Clarence, with a melancholy smile, bid him speak Sir John Falstaff, his old enemy, fair now. The chief justice said that what he had done he did in honour, led by the impartial conduct of his soul, and he would never beg a remission; for if truth and upright innocency failed him he vowed he would away to the king his master that was dead and tell him who had sent him. As he uttered these manly words Prince Henry, who was now King Henry the Fifth, came into the chamber, and the chief justice gave him good-morrow, saying, "Heaven save your majesty." The new king loved an honest directness of speech, and was out of humour with the roundabout affectations of the court. He answered that the new and gorgeous garment, majesty, sat not so easy on him as the chief justice thought, and, in his heart, knowing the feelings of distrust with which all those present regarded him, he said, "Brothers, you mix your sadness with some fear; this is the English, not the Turkish court. Harry succeeds Harry, and, by Heaven, I bid you be assured I'll be your brother and your father too. Let me but bear your love and I'll bear your cares." Still were they unconvinced, so sudden was the change

in their brother's demeanour, and he charged them with looking strangely on him. "And you most," he said to the chief justice. "You are, I think, assured I do not love you." The judge replied that he was assured the king had no just cause to hate him. "No!" cried King Harry. "How might a prince of my great hopes forget so great indignities you laid upon me? What! rate, rebuke, and roughly send to prison the immediate heir of England? Was this easy? May this be forgotten?" The justice gravely and steadfastly said that he then did assume the person of the prince's father; the image of the king's power lay in him, and while he was busy for the commonwealth in the administration of his law the prince pleased to forget the judge's place and struck him in his very seat of judgment. Whereon, as a bold offender to the king, he gave bold way to his authority and committed the prince to prison. "If my deed were ill," he said, "be you contented, wearing now the garland, to have a son set your decrees at naught and pluck down justice from your awful bench. Behold yourself disdained so by a son, and then imagine me taking your part. After this, sentence me, and as you are a king, speak what I have done that misbecomes my place, my person, or my liege's sovereignty." The young king feigned to be softened by this manly appeal, but he had forgiven the chief justice even before he spoke, for he knew his great worth and needed his wisdom in his

counsels. He said the judge was right and weighed the question well, and giving him his hand, he bid him still bear the balance and the sword, signs of his office, and wished his honours might increase till he lived to see a son of Harry offend and obey as he had done; for then he might live to speak his father's words: "Happy am I that have a man so bold, that dares do justice on my proper son; and no less happy, having such a son, that would deliver up his greatness so into the hands of justice." Then to his brothers the young king said that his affections lay in his father's tomb, and that he sadly survived with his spirit to mock the expectation of the world, to frustrate prophecies, and to raze out rotten opinion, which had written him down after his seeming.

The tidings of all these sudden changes found Sir John Falstaff tossing sack with Justice Shallow and his kinsman Silence, in the garden of Shallow's house in Gloucestershire. As they sat under the orchard trees trolling catches and rambling in tipsy talk, Pistol came in unexpectedly with news from the court. "What wind blew you hither?" asked Sir John. "Not the ill-wind which blows none to good," answered the rogue; and without preface he said that the knight had become one of the greatest men in the realm; then falling into his favorite rant of the actor, said,—

> "And tidings do I bring, and lucky joys,
> And golden times, and happy news of price."

"I prithee now, deliver them like a man of this world," commanded Falstaff, and after much more of the same bombastic rhyming, Pistol told him of King Henry's death and of the ascension of Harry, his son, Falstaff's friend. On the instant the knight was upon his feet. "Away, Bardolph; saddle my horse," he cried; and he told Master Robert Shallow to choose what office in the land he would, and it should be his, and Pistol, he said, should be double-charged with dignities for bringing the good tidings. He knew the young king was sick for him, and the laws of England were at his command, so that he might take any man's horses. "Happy are they which have been my friends, and woe unto my lord chief justice!" were his parting words.

On they rode to London, and arrived at last before Westminster Abbey on the very day of the coronation of King Henry the Fifth. As the procession came forth from the abbey, Falstaff, Justice Shallow, Pistol, Bardolph, and Sir John's page were foremost in the throng about the doors. "Stand here by me, Master Robert Shallow," said the knight, "I will make the king do you grace. I will leer upon him as he comes by; and do but mark the countenance he will give me." "Bless thy lungs, good knight," answered Shallow. Sir John bid Pistol stand behind him, exclaiming to Shallow, the while, "Oh, if I had had time to have made new liveries, I would have bestowed the thousand pounds I borrowed of you;

but it is no matter; this poor show doth better: this doth infer the zeal I had to see him."

As they talked thus amid the murmuring crowd, a trumpet sounded within, and a shout went up, and presently the king, followed by his train, in which walked the chief justice, came forth. "Save thy grace, King Hal! my royal Hal," cried Falstaff; and again, "Save thee, my sweet boy!" whereupon the young king, pausing, pointed sternly at the knight and said, "My lord chief justice, speak to that vain man." Then the justice, turning to Sir John, asked, "Have you your wits? know you what it is you speak?" But Falstaff ignored his question and continued to cry, "My king! my Jove! I speak to thee, my heart!" but the king gravely replied, "I know thee not, old man: fall to thy prayers. How ill white hairs become a fool and jester! I have long dreamed of such a kind of man, so surfeit-swelled, so old, and so profane; but being awake, I do despise my dream." Then he bid the knight henceforth to make less his body and more his grace; to know that the grave gaped for him thrice wider than for other men; and he told him to presume not that the king was the thing he was; for Heaven knew and the world should perceive that he had turned away from his former self. Upon this he banished Sir John forever, not to come near to his person by ten miles; but he allowed him a competence for living, so, as he said, the lack of means might not enforce him to evil. He assured the old

knight that as he heard that he and his followers reformed themselves, he would, according to their strength and qualities, give them advancement, and he gave it into the charge of the chief justice to see these things performed.

Then, in stately wise, the procession moved on, and Falstaff was left crestfallen in the midst of his wondering fellows. "Master Shallow," said he, with his accustomed audacity, "I owe you a thousand pounds; but do not grieve at this; I shall be sent for in private to him;" and thus persisting in this explanation of the king's change, he asked all his followers to dinner.

As they were about to go with him, the chief justice again appeared with a band of officers, who immediately arrested Falstaff to carry him off to the Fleet prison. The knight made a pitiful appeal to his old enemy; but the justice would not hear him, and he was borne away to banishment until his conversation should appear more wise and modest to the world.

KING HENRY V.

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WHEN the wild Prince Hal, companion of rogues and cut-purses, ascended the throne as King Henry the Fifth of England, wisdom, like an angel, came and whipped the offending Adam out of him. Never was such a sudden scholar made; never was reformation so complete. The whole nation was blessed in the change, for the young king was found to be master of the state craft; he could reason in divinity with his prelates, he was wise in policy, and he had at command the whole art of war. It was the wonder of his subjects how he should have gained such knowledge, for his time had been spent in vain courses and his years were still unripe. But the strawberry grows underneath the nettle, and so, it appeared, had the prince obscured his true character under the veil of wildness.

Hence it was that when he became king he sagely remembered his father's advice to "busy giddy minds with foreign quarrels," and began to make preparations for invading France, the crown of which he claimed to inherit from his great-

grandsire and from Edward the Black Prince, his great uncle. He called his counsellors about him to justify his title to the French throne, and having received the sanction of the Archbishop of Canterbury and of his subordinate prelates, and the encouragement of his warlike nobles, he determined to make the French messengers, whom the dauphin had sent to him, and whom he was about to receive, bear back his defiance.

Thus it was that these same messengers were brought before him as he held court in his room of state at London, and, addressing them from the throne, he said he was well prepared to know the pleasure of his fair cousin, the dauphin. The ambassadors were bearers of an unwelcome message, and, fearing King Henry's anger, they prayed leave freely to render what they had been charged to say. This the king readily granted, and bid them tell him the dauphin's mind with uncurbed plainness. Then the Frenchmen, with what courtesy they could, said that King Henry, lately sending into France, had claimed certain dukedoms in the right of his great predecessor, King Edward the Third. In answer to which claim, quoth they, the prince, their master, said that King Harry savoured too much of his youth, and he bid him be advised that there was naught in France could he won by a nimble dance. Hereupon they brought forth a great cask, and, presenting it, said, "Our master, the dauphin, therefore sends you, meeter for your spirit, this tun of treasure, and, in lieu of

this, desires you to let the dukedoms you claim hear no more of you." The king asked his uncle, the Duke of Exeter, to examine the treasure, and this he did, but found only a heap of tennis-balls.

King Henry took this grim pleasantry with a good countenance, and sent back to the dauphin a message bolder and more haughty than his own. "We understand him well," he said, "how he comes over us with our wilder days, not measuring what use we made of them; but tell him I will keep my state, be like a king, and show my sail of greatness when I do rouse me in my throne of France." These, and many more defiant words the king uttered, and, at last, dismissing the humbled ambassadors, he descended from his throne and moved among his lords, urging them to hurry on the expedition, for, as he said, he would chide this dauphin at his father's door.

But when the time was ripe and the royal forces were about to embark from England, the king secretly learned of a conspiracy which was raising head against his life even among those nearest his person. For the French feared the might of the English arms notwithstanding the bold words of the dauphin, and they had made hidden endeavour to do that by foul means which they despaired of accomplishing in open warfare. They therefore took into their pay three of King Henry's chosen courtiers, men on whom he leaned for counsel and support, and these three, Richard, Earl of Cambridge; Henry, Lord Scroop of Masham; and

Sir Thomas Grey, had sold their honour and conspired to kill the king.

When King Henry arrived at Southampton and was on the eve of going aboard his ship, he drew these noblemen together and feigned as a last precaution to ask their advice. They did not suspect that the king had discovered their guilt, and were, indeed, then and there about to do their work of treachery; but the brave young king determined to make them foreswear themselves before he charged them with treason, and he asked many questions to which they needs must make loyal replies which they uttered with false hearts, but smiling faces. Then at last the king, to further try them, bid his uncle of Exeter to liberate the man committed yesterday for railing at his royal person, for his majesty said it was excess of wine that set him on, and upon inquiry he had been found to be worthy of pardon. Against this the three noblemen pleaded strenuously, for they said the king might be merciful, yet must for his own sake be just. "Alas," replied King Henry, "your too much love and care for me are heavy orisons against this poor wretch,—and yet we will enlarge him." Then, returning again to his French causes, he asked, "Who are the late commissioners?" to which each of the three lords answered that he was one, and the king handed them each in turn his commission. He stood scanning their faces with a grim smile as they read, and asked, "Why, how now, gentlemen? What

do you see in those papers that you lose so much colour? Look you how they change," he said, turning to the rest; and the group about the king saw that the three nobles were deathly pale.

The papers which he had handed them were in reality their death-warrants, and realizing that their treason was discovered, with one voice they acknowledged their guilt and pleaded to be speedily relieved by death from the shame which their disloyalty had brought upon them. "God absolve you in his mercy," said the king. "You have conspired against our royal person, joined with a proclaimed enemy, and received from his coffers the golden earnest of our death. Touching our person, we seek no revenge; but we must preserve our kingdom's safety, and to its laws we now deliver you." Then he bid his officers lead them hence, while he and his loyal lords hoisted sail and set out for France.

All London that could bear arms had joined the king's forces, and it was not strange to find among his followers the company of mad rogues whose leader had been Sir John Falstaff. Nym, Bardolph, and Pistol, and the knight's one-time page had put on the livery of war and were outwardly as valiant soldiers as any in the king's service; but poor Sir John himself was not among them, for they had learned from Mistress Quickly just before their departure for France that the old knight had given up the ghost. "Nay, sure," said she, in her cockney speech, "he's in Arthur's

bosom. 'A made a finer end, and went away, an' it had been any christom child; 'a parted even just between twelve and one, e'en at the turning o' the tide; for after I saw him fumble with the sheets and play with flowers, and smile upon his fingers' ends, I knew there was but one way; for his nose was as sharp as a pen, and 'a babbled of green fields;" and thus describing with her simple words the very picture of Sir John's death, she bid them adieu, and they hurried off to the ships.

The royal fleet held straight away for Harfleur, in France, and when the king arrived there he lost no time in laying siege to that city, for the authorities, expecting assistance from the dauphin, resisted his peaceful overtures, and he was resolved to take it by force if it would not acknowledge his right to be its ruler. All the great and powerful machinery of war, which King Henry knew well how to wield, was brought against the stubborn town, and the king himself led his soldiers up to the walls again and again, urging them on with courageous words and teaching them to cry, "God for Harry! England! and Saint George!" At last when the English had well-nigh won the day, the governor and some of the citizens of Harfleur came forth upon the walls, and held parley with the young king, who pictured to them the destruction which would surely overtake them if they persisted longer in refusing to open their gates. So grim were his words, and so determined his mood, that the governor was forced to

yield, and he invited the English to enter. Then King Henry sent his uncle, the Earl of Exeter, into the town to fortify it strongly against the French; while he, because the winter was coming on and sickness growing among his soldiers, retired to Calais.

But as the English army approached the Castle of Agincourt, the French, who had been watching King Henry's course, aware of his weakened condition and prepared to attack him at the first opportunity, came abreast of his column and camped at night within earshot of his sentinels. Camp-fire answered camp-fire through the darkness, and each line of battle could see the other's shadowed faces by the pale flames. The steeds of the opposing armies neighed to each other, and from the tents the busy hammers of the armourers could be heard closing rivets up against the morrow's fight.

At last the country cocks began to crow, and the clocks tolled the early morning in, while the confident and over-lusty French began to play at dice for the English they should capture, so to pass away the tardy night which kept them from their certain victory. But the poor condemned English sat patiently by their watch-fires inly ruminating on the morning's danger. Their lank-lean cheeks and war-worn coats presented them in the light of the gazing moon as so many horrid ghosts. King Henry walked from tent to tent visiting all the host, bidding them good-morrow,

and, with a modest smile, calling them brothers, friends, and countrymen. Upon his royal face there lurked not a look to show how dread an army had surrounded him ; but he bore a cheerful semblance and sweet majesty, which every wretch who before was pale and pining saw with great comfort.

To his brothers and nobles, who needed less his encouragement, he spoke inspiring words. He said to Gloster it was true that they were in great danger, but the greater therefore should be their courage; and to his brother Bedford that there was some soul of goodness in things evil, if only men would observingly distil it out.

But the leader of so bold an enterprise feels deeper pangs of doubt than even those whom he would arouse, and to him the pain is the more acute that he must suppress and conceal it. Hence it was that King Henry retired anon, saying he and his bosom must debate a while and be alone; and going forth through his camp disguised both by the darkness and his habit, he encountered Pistol, with whom he exchanged some swaggering words, and finally as the morning broke he fell in with three soldiers and pleased his fancy by questioning them about the king, and putting their loyalty to the test. They asked him what his commander thought of their present estate, and, trying their mood, he answered that his commander, Sir Thomas Erpingham, thought them even as men wrecked upon a sand, that look to be washed off

by the next tide. But, said they, he hath not told his thought to the king? to which King Henry replied, no, and that it was not meet he should; for though he now boldly spoke it to them, yet he deemed the king but a man as he was himself, to whom the violet smelt the same, and the air and sky had the like appearance, for all the king's senses had but human conditions, and, his ceremonies laid by, he appeared in his nakedness but a man. Yet, as he said, no man should possess the king with fears, lest he, by showing weakness, should dishearten his army.

But the temper of the soldiers had been broken by privation and cold, and their courage had ebbed away as they wandered ill-fed and ill-clothed through that strange land, hence they answered that they believed the king, bitter as the night was, could wish himself in the Thames up to his neck, as they would be themselves, so they were quit of France. And when King Henry said he knew the king would not be anywhere but where he was, they replied that they would he were there alone. This grieved the troubled heart of Harry, who to ēnkindle their courage said he could not die anywhere so contented as in the king's company, his cause being just and his quarrel honourable; but they questioned the cause, saying its justice was more than they should seek after, for they knew enough if they knew they were the king's subjects, and if his cause were wrong their obedience would wipe away the crime; but

if the cause were not good the king himself would have a heavy reckoning to answer for, and if his men did not die in holiness, it were a black matter for him who led them to it.

Then with that same skill in reasoning which had surprised his lords and divines, King Henry made it plain to the humbler understanding of these soldiers that the king was in no wise accountable for the particular deaths of his men, for there is no king, be his cause never so spotless, can try it out with all unspotted soldiers. So deeply, at last, did his words impress them, though he appeared to be but one of their own station, that they gave up questioning and resolved to fight lustily for the king. But one of them named Williams thought the fellow boastful who had talked so confidently of his majesty, and when the stranger unguardedly said if he lived to see the king ransomed by the French he would never trust his word more, the good soldier who had but a moment ago doubted his king, took up his cause and mocked at one who had the impudence to say he would not trust the royal word. Seeing that he had nearly betrayed himself, and glad of so easy a way out of the dilemma, King Harry said the reproof was something too round, and that he would be angry if the time were convenient; but Williams was a brave heart withal, and he proposed that it should be a quarrel between them if they lived through the coming battle. They then exchanged gloves as a gage, each putting the

other's in his hat, and the understanding was that upon either acknowledging his glove the quarrel should be fought out. Said Williams, "If ever you come to me and say, after to-morrow, 'This is my glove,' by this hand I will take you a box on the ear;" and the king replied that if ever he lived to see it, he would challenge it, even though he found Williams in the king's company. Hereupon the quarrel was like to have grown hot, but Bates, another of the company, urged them to be friends, for they already had French quarrels enough; and Williams bidding the stranger keep his word, the three soldiers passed on, while the king went into the dusk to be alone before the battle.

For a brief space he communed with himself and thought upon the vanity of kingship which costs so dear to him who wears the crown. But presently Sir Thomas Erpingham found him out in his seclusion and told him that all his nobles were seeking through his camp to find him. He bid the old knight to collect them all together at the royal tent, and then dismissed them, and made a last prayer to the God of battles that he would steel his soldiers' hearts and possess them not with fear. And because of his father's treatment of King Richard, he pleaded that God would think not upon his fault in compassing the crown, for that his son had newly interred King Richard's body and bestowed upon it more contrite tears than from it had issued drops of blood. With

more devout thought he rose from his knees, and, uplifted by his devotion, went back to the camp prepared to lead his army with a stout heart against the foe.

Meanwhile, in the French camp the richly armoured knights were preparing as for a holiday, rather than a battle. So much contempt had they for the few and feeble English, whom they outnumbered five to one, that the warfare was but a matter of mirth with them and they expended their bright wits upon the enemy in many a quip which set all who heard it into laughter: as, that there was not work enough for their hands, nor blood enough in the poor band to give each of their curtle-axes a stain. And one said if they but blew upon them, the vapour of the French valour would overturn them; and it was certain that the very sound of their trumpets would bring the English to their knees.

The dauphin feigned to fear that he should lose some of the glory he coveted in conquering King Henry because of his ill-conditioned soldiers, and, half in jest, he proposed to send them dinners and fresh suits and give their fasting horses provender, then to fight them. But he did not enough heed the noble temper of the English king, and he undervalued the courage of his soldiers, which ever rose with difficulties; for now in the face of sixty thousand French they were steeled to die rather than surrender, and, far from flying, looked eagerly for the battle to begin.

A herald was sent to King Henry from the Constable of France, who was the leader of the French army, offering to accept a peace if the English king would pay a sufficient ransom; but King Henry made answer that they should conquer him first and then sell his bones, and he added, "The man that did once sell the lion's skin while the beast lived was killed in hunting him," with much more that was manly and bold, which Montjoy, the herald, was charged to deliver to his master.

And now, all offers of peace thus being rejected, the battle at last began and raged hotly throughout the field until the French ranks were broken and their craven troops began to fly. There were enough Frenchmen still alive to smother the English in their throngs, but despite the efforts of their leaders, who, themselves also flying, were shamed into a brief resistance, the day was lost and King Henry and his army were left victors on the glorious field, which the king called Agincourt.

Standing there in the flush of victory amid his nobles, the king saw near by him the soldier with whom, in his disguise, he had exchanged gloves in token of their quarrel, and he bid one call him thither. When this same Michael Williams came into his presence, King Henry asked him why he wore that glove in his hat, and Williams told him it was the gage of one he should fight with. The king, feigning not to know it, asked if this were an Englishman, and the soldier replied that it be-

longed to a rascal that swaggered with him last night, and then he told over the conditions of their quarrel, vowing that he would roundly box the ears of him who wore his glove. King Henry's old love for such merry tricks kindling anew, he put it to Captain Fluellen whether it were fit the soldier should keep his oath. "He is a villain else," said the Welsh captain; but the king argued that he might have to challenge a gentleman of great rank. Fluellen held that though he were as good a gentleman as Beelzebub himself, yet it would be necessary that he keep his oath, and so the king, relishing the humour of the scene, bid the soldier keep his vow. Then he commanded him to call Captain Gower thither, and, while he was gone, he hastily thrust the glove that Williams had given him into Fluellen's hand, asking him to stick it in his cap, for, he explained, when the Duke of Alençon and he were down together in the fight, he had plucked this glove from his helm, and if any man challenged it he was a friend of Alençon, and hence an enemy to England; and he said if the captain encountered any such he should apprehend him, if he did love his king. The fiery Welshman was flattered by his majesty's show of confidence in him, and he said he would fain see the man that had but two legs that should find himself aggrieved at that glove. Then the king pretended again that he desired to see Gower, and sent Fluellen also to look for him; but when the Welsh captain was out of sight, he explained the

merry ruse of the glove, and hurried Warwick and his brother Gloster after him, for he feared that blood would be spilt between two such hot spirits as Williams and the Welshman.

Presently these two met, Williams promptly challenging the glove in Fluellen's hat and striking him roundly on the ear, whereupon the Welshman would have made short work of the soldier, but for the timely arrival of Warwick and Gloster. In another instant the king came up crying, with well-feigned surprise, "How now! What's the matter?" to which Fluellen proudly answered that he had caught the traitor. Williams pleaded that in buffeting the wearer of the glove he had but kept his oath; but the Welshman called him by a score of foul names, and asked the king to bear witness that the glove the soldier had challenged was his majesty's own. Then King Henry took his glove from Williams, and holding up its fellow, showed him that the owner was the king. "'Twas I you promised to strike," he said, "and you have spoken most vilely of me." Fluellen said the soldier's neck should answer for it if there was any martial law in the world, and the king asked him how he could make satisfaction for his disloyalty. Williams's stout English heart was undismayed by the captain's threat or the king's question, and he answered that all offences come from the heart, and never came any from his that might offend his king; whereupon the king, who was but putting the brave fellow to the test, bid his uncle of

Exeter to fill a glove with crowns and give it to him, saying, "Keep it fellow, and wear it as an honour in your cap till I do challenge it." Then he commanded the good Welsh captain to be friends with the soldier, and the merry sport, which even on the battle-field cheered the gay heart of King Hal, was ended in a pleasant leave-taking.

When the reckoning of the fight was made it was found that many noble prisoners had fallen into the hands of the English, and that ten thousand of the French lay slain upon the field, while King Henry had lost but five-and-twenty men, and only two or three of rank.

With a deep thankfulness for their good fortune, the conquerors started in procession towards the village, there to give praise to God, for, said the king: "It is His only," and to do all holy rites; and when the mass was sung and the dead were buried, the host set out for Calais, and so for England, where when they landed on the beach they were greeted by throngs of old men and wives and boys, whose shouts and claps outroared the deep-mouthed sea.

The king solemnly set on to London, but when he was come to Blackheath the great lords desired him to have his bruised helmet and his bended sword borne before him into the city; but he forbid it, being free from vanity and vainglorious pride, and said that praise for his conquests belonged only to God.

London poured out her citizens to meet its victorious king and his brave army, and fetched them into the city in triumph. There for a brief time the king remained, but it was not long before he returned again to France with all his nobles in his train and visited the French king and his court at Troyes, in Champagne.

The Duke of Burgundy had laboured diligently to bring about this royal interview, and now he prayed their majesties, in the presence of all the proud nobles of either realm, that peace, the dear nurse of arts and joyful births, might again be allowed to reign in France, the best garden of the world, whither for so long a time she had been chased. To this King Henry replied that if the French wanted peace they must buy it with full accord to all his just demands, whose conditions he had duly made known. But though the French king had heard these conditions, he had as yet made no answer, for, as he said, he had but glanced over them with a cursory eye; and he now asked King Henry if he would consent to appoint some of his council to sit with him once again and thus to re-survey the articles, when he would presently pass his final answer. To this King Henry assented; but he asked that his cousin Katharine, the French king's daughter, might remain with him while the rest withdrew, for she was the subject of his chief demand contained in the articles they were to examine.

When all were gone out save King Harry and

this fair French princess, the outspoken king began without preface to woo her, and asked if she would vouchsafe to teach a soldier terms such as would enter at a lady's ear and plead his love-suit to her gentle heart? She could little comprehend such an unceremonious speech even if she had better known the language in which it was spoken; but King Harry, impetuous in his love-making as in all else, told her that if she would love him soundly with her French heart he would be glad to hear her confess it brokenly with her English tongue. "Do you like me, Kate?" he asked. She could not understand what "like me" meant; but he said an angel was like her, in his punning English; and when she replied that tongues of men were full of deceits, he said he was glad she could speak no better English, because, if she could, she would find him so plain a king that she would think he had sold his farm to buy his crown. "I know no ways to mince it in love," quoth he, "but directly to say, 'I love you;' then if you urge me further than to say, 'Do you in faith?' I wear out my suit." And his impatient English spirit brooking no delay, he bid her give him her answer, and so clap hands and a bargain. "How say you lady?" cried he; but all she said was, "Me understand well." "Marry," he ran on, "if you would put me to verses or to dance for your sake, why, you undo me. If I could win a lady at leap-frog or by vaulting into my saddle with my armour on my back, I should

quickly leap into a wife; but before God, Kate, I cannot look greenly, nor gasp out my eloquence; nor have I any cunning in protestation; only downright oaths which I never use till urged, nor never break for urging." And he protested if she could love a fellow of this temper, whose face was not worth sunburning, she was welcome to him; for he spoke to her plain soldier; if she could love him so, she might take him; if not, to say that he should die were true enough, but for her sake never; yet he did vow he loved her, too. Thus he pleaded till he had well-nigh won her; but coyly weighing his love with her duty, she said it was not possible she should love the enemy of France; and he granted as much, but argued that by loving him she should love the friend of France, for he loved France so well that he would not part with a village of it, he would have it all his. "And Kate," he said, "when France is mine and I am yours, then yours is France and you are mine." "I cannot tell vat is dat," said she, in her broken accents; so he told her in equally broken French. Then again and again he asked her in good round Saxon if she loved him; till at last she gave a shy consent, and he kissed her hand and called her his queen. She tried to withdraw her hand, saying the king must not bend down to kiss the hand of his servant, whereupon he vowed he would kiss her lips; but she told him it was not the fashion in France for maids to kiss before marriage; which precaution he cast to the winds,

for, quoth he, nice customs curtsy to great kings, and straightway he kissed her on the mouth. Said he, "You have witchcraft in your lips, Kate, for there is more eloquence in a sugar touch of them than in the tongues of the French council; and they should sooner persuade Harry of England than a general petition of monarchs."

At this moment the French king and queen and the lords with whom they had been closeted over King Henry's demands returned to the chamber. The Duke of Burgundy, seeing how the case stood between the English king and the French princess, asked if he was teaching her English; but the king made no concealment of his suit and frankly told the duke that he would have her learn to love him, and that was good English; then turning to the French king he asked, abruptly, "Shall Kate be my wife?" "So please you," was the reply, and King Henry said he was content if the maid that stood in the way of his wish should show him the way to his will. But the French king, having felt the warlike power of the English, had found it wise to give consent to all the conditions imposed by King Henry, and there was nothing now to bar him from his will nor to impede him in his love-making. He asked of his lords of England if the French king had yielded all, and they said, all, saving that he had not yet subscribed to the condition that upon having occasion to write for a matter of grant, he should name King Henry, in French, his very

dear son Henry, King of England, and heir of France, and after it, the same in Latin. This also, the French king finally yielded, and in all love and dear alliance he gave his daughter to King Henry, bidding him take her, and from her royal blood to rear up issue to him, that the contending kingdoms of France and England, whose very shores looked pale with envy of each other's happiness, might cease their hatred forever. "Amen!" cried all the nobles in the royal trains of England and France, and King Henry kissed the princess in token that she was to be his sovereign queen; whereupon he ordered his servants to prepare for their marriage. "On which day," said he to the assembled lords, "will I swear to Kate, and you shall swear to me; and may our oaths be well-kept and prosperous!"

END OF VOL. I.

TALES FROM SHAKSPEARE

BY

HARRISON S. MORRIS.

VOL. II.

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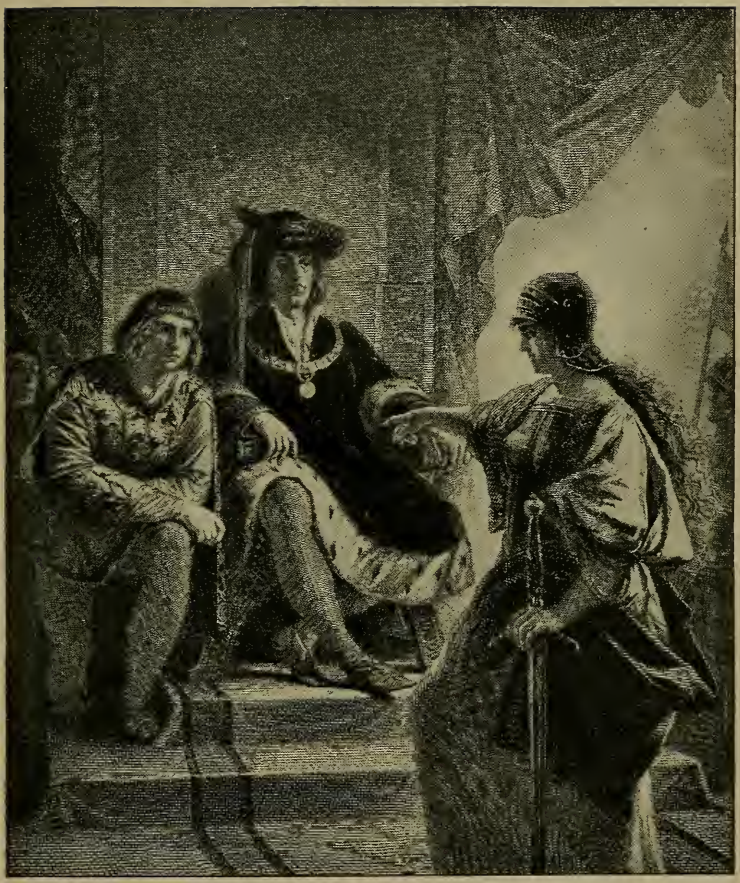

KING HENRY VI.—PART I.

UPON the death of King Henry the Fifth of England the possessions which he had conquered in France began to revolt from the English crown and go back to their allegiance to the Dauphin Charles, who was thereupon proclaimed King of France at Rheims. With this prince were joined the Bastard of Orleans; Reignier, Duke of Anjou; and the Duke of Alençon, who, with their forces, made a formidable array of strength against their English masters.

The successor of King Henry the Fifth upon the English throne was his son, the young Prince Henry, who assumed the title of King Henry the Sixth; but he was over-young to reign, and hence his uncle Humphrey, Duke of Gloster, was made Protector until he should be old enough to take up the sceptre.

There was but one English warrior then in France on whom his countrymen could rely in this emergency, and this was Lord Talbot, a stout and courageous knight whom the English loved and

the French mightily feared. But as the great lords stood mourning about King Henry's coffin in Westminster Abbey, certain ill tidings came to them of Talbot's capture by the French, which added tenfold to the bitterness of their grief. A messenger, hastily arrived from France, brought the news that Talbot was overthrown on the tenth of the previous August, when, retiring from the siege of Orleans and having scarcely six thousand men in his troop, he was surrounded and set upon before he had leisure even to form them into ranks. He wanted pikes to set before his archers and protect them from the French horsemen, but instead of these he plucked out hedges and pitched them confusedly into the ground. The fight, said the messenger, lasted more than three hours, where the valiant Talbot enacted wonders with his sword and lance. He slew hundreds, and none durst stand out against him; he was here, there, and everywhere, till the French exclaimed that Satan was in arms, and all the whole army stood at gaze upon him. His soldiers, spying his undaunted spirit, cried out amain and rushed into the midst of the battle. And here the conquest would have been fully achieved if Sir John Fastolfe had not played the coward. This false knight was in the rear, where he had been placed on purpose to relieve and follow his fellow-leaders, but he fled without striking a blow, and hence grew the general massacre of the English, who were enclosed with their enemies. A

base Walloon, at this point, thrust a spear into Talbot's back, whom all France durst not presume to look in the face. But though he was wounded, the messenger said, Talbot was still alive, and a prisoner, as were also his fellow-lords, Scales and Hungerford.

The receipt of such alarming news, with additional tidings that Orleans was besieged and the English army grown weak and faint, turned the nobles away from their mourning and set them instantly into action. The Dukes of Exeter, Bedford, Gloster, and the Bishop of Winchester, uncles of the young king, turned from the grave of Henry and began at once to make preparations for reinforcing the Earl of Salisbury, Lord Talbot's successor in the leadership, who sadly needed supplies and whose men were hardly kept from mutiny, so few were they in proportion to the multitude of their enemies.

Taking advantage of this, the French made strenuous endeavor to relieve Orleans, but they found the Englishmen, so they said, all Samsons and Goliaths; lean, raw-boned rascals, who showed unheard-of courage and audacity even in their weakness; and King Charles of France, finding that it was hopeless to take the city by force, resolved to let hunger conquer those who held it.

As he was about to withdraw his forces and thus leave the field to the English, the Bastard of Orleans sought him out in his camp, and told him of unexpected succour which was at hand. This, said

the bearer of the news, was a certain holy maid who, by a vision sent to her from heaven, was ordained to raise the tedious siege and drive the English from France. He said she had a spirit of deep prophecy exceeding the nine sibyls of Rome, for she could descry what was past and what was to come, and he asked the king if he should bring her into his presence. Driven by ill-success in the field to snatch at any hope, Charles commanded that the maid should be called in to him; but first, to try her skill, he said, Lord Reignier should stand as dauphin in his place; and he told Reignier to question her proudly and let his looks be stern, for by such means they might sound what skill in divination she really had.

When La Pucelle, as she was called, came into the royal presence, Reignier, pretending to be the dauphin, said, "Fair maid, is it you who do these wondrous feats?" and she straightway answered, "Reignier, is it you who think to beguile me?" Then she asked for the dauphin's self, and looking about her, bid him come from his hiding-place, for she knew him well, though she had never seen him. But she bid him not to be amazed, for nothing was hid from her, and motioned him apart that they might talk in private.

She then told the dauphin her history. She was by birth, she said, a shepherd's daughter. Her wit was untrained in any kind of art, but it had pleased Heaven to shine on her contemptible estate, for while she waited on her tender lambs and

displayed her cheeks to the parching sun, God's mother deigned to appear to her, and, in a vision full of majesty, willed her to leave her base vocation and free her country from calamity. The Virgin promised her success, and revealed herself in complete glory; and, the maid said, whereas she was black and swart before, the clear rays which the Virgin shed upon her infused her with the beauty she was then blessed with, which the prince might see. She told him that she could answer unpremeditated any question he might ask her, or if he dared to try her courage in combat, he would find that she exceeded her sex, wherefore he should be fortunate if he received her for his warlike mate.

The dauphin was astonished by her high terms, and asked only the proof of arms; for, if she should buckle with him in combat and should vanquish him, her words were proven true; otherwise, he would renounce all confidence in her.

She was prepared, and showed her keen-edged sword decked with five flowèr-de-luces on each side, which she had chosen at Touraine, in St. Katharine's churchyard, out of a great deal of old iron. "Come, then, o' God's name; I fear no woman," said the dauphin. And at once they brandished their arms and began the fight. It did not take long for the Maid of Orleans to overcome the dauphin, and in a little space he cried out, "Stay, stay thy hands; thou art an Amazon, and fightest with the sword of Deborah." The

Maid said that Christ's mother helped her, else she were too weak; and the dauphin, convinced of her supernatural gifts, told her that whoever helped her, she must help him, for he was not only subdued by her skill in arms, but his heart also was conquered. "Excellent Pucelle," quoth he, "let me be thy servant, not thy sovereign;" but she said she must not yield to any rites of love, for her profession was sacred; nor would she think upon a recompense until she had chased all foes from France. She was, she said, assigned to be the English scourge, and she promised to raise the siege of Orleans that very night.

The English had, in the mean time, won the suburbs of Orleans, and the Lords Salisbury and Talbot, the latter of whom had now escaped from the French, with Sir William Glansdale and Sir Thomas Gargrave, climbed to the upper chamber of a tall tower which overlooked the city, to lay plans for its capture. The dauphin had learned that it was the wont of the English leaders to ascend this same tower and peer across the walls from its iron-grated windows, and he bid his master gunner direct a piece of ordnance against it, and watch for the foe to appear there. Thus it was that while these English generals were listening to Lord Talbot's account of his cruel treatment in the French prison and of his escape, a shot was fired which struck through the window and killed Lord Salisbury and Sir Thomas Gargrave. As Talbot, driven to desperation by this sudden loss of friends

and able supporters, was crying aloud to them in his grief, a messenger came panting up the steps, and told him the French had gathered head, for the dauphin, with one Joan la Pucelle, a holy prophetess newly risen up, had come with a great power to raise the siege.

More than ever vengeful, Talbot rose up from the side of Salisbury, crying, "Frenchmen, I'll be a Salisbury to you. I'll stamp your hearts out with my horse's heels," and he bid the messenger bear Lord Salisbury's body into his tent, then hurried away to meet the enemy.

It was not difficult for him to drive back the dauphin, but when the Maid of Orleans advanced in reinforcement of her royal leader, the English took alarm at the unwonted spectacle and fled before her. This was a sight new to both English and French, and it angered Talbot, who himself came forward to lead his flying troops. He was astounded at such a show of cowardice, and when the Maid herself came up with him, he vowed he would have a bout with her, be she devil or devil's dam. "I will draw blood on you, witch!" he cried, and they straightway fell to blows; but the powerful Maid had not strength enough to overcome so valorous a knight as Talbot. She retired in a little space, bidding him farewell, and saying that his hour had not yet come. She succeeded, however, in spite of him, in entering Orleans with her followers, and this so enraged him that he bid his dishonoured soldiers tear the lions out of Eng-

land's coat of arms, and renounce their soil, for thus running like sheep from their often-subdued slaves, the French. And presently, the more to inflame Lord Talbot's anger, the Pucelle, with the dauphin, and Lords Reignier and Alençon, appeared above on the walls of the city, and advanced their colors defiantly in the face of the English.

All that day the followers of the dauphin caroused and banqueted in celebration of their conquest, and at night they slept so soundly that no soul heard the approach of Lord Talbot and his forces, who came stealthily with scaling-ladders and drums beating a dead march to surprise the town. Lord Talbot decided to make his entrance several ways, so that if one party failed the other might still rise against the enemy's force. To this end Lord Bedford agreed to go to one corner, and the Duke of Burgundy to another. They scaled the walls, crying, "St. George! A Talbot!" but were not detected until all had entered the city, when a sentinel more wakeful than his fellows, called to arms, and in an instant the French generals, half ready and half unready, entering from all sides, leaped over the walls for safety. They had never known so warlike an enterprise or a more venturous or desperate one, and they looked upon Talbot as a very fiend.

As the Bastard, Alençon, and Reignier stood together beneath the walls, thankful for their escape, and marvelling how the dauphin and the Maid of Orleans had sped, these latter approached

them. Charles was angered with the Maid, and charged her with deceit and cunning because she had not warned him of the English attack; but she pleaded that her power could not always be alert whether she were awake or asleep, and said if his improvident soldiers had kept good watch the sudden mischief would never have overtaken them. Then the dauphin blamed the default upon the Duke of Alencon, who, being captain of the night watch, looked no better to that weighty charge; but the duke denied that it was his fault, as did all the others ; and the Maid said that the deed being done, it behooved them all the more speedily to gather their scattered soldiers and lay new platforms to endamage the English in their stronghold. But at this moment a sudden alarm was heard near by, and an English soldier approached crying, "A Talbot!" in very terror of which name the mighty leaders of the French took to their heels, leaving their clothes behind them as booty for this feigning soldier, who used no other weapon but his commander's awful name.

Among the English in the city of Orleans there was great rejoicing at the victory, but this was stilled for a time by Lord Talbot, who bid his followers bring forth the body of old Lord Salisbury and bury it in the market-place. There he vowed he would erect a tomb to this brave warrior upon which should be engraved a record of the sack of Orleans and of the treacherous manner of the old lord's death.

When Salisbury had been buried, Talbot was about to sally forth and follow the French with all his power, when a messenger arrived from a certain French lady, the Countess of Auvergne, who, the bearer said, admiring Talbot's renown, entreated that he would vouchsafe to visit her poor castle, that she might boast she had beheld the man whose glory filled the world with loud report. Talbot returned great thanks and said that in all submission he would attend her. He then dismissed the messenger and called one of his own captains to him, in whose ear he whispered some instructions. "You perceive my mind?" asked his lordship, aloud. "I do, my lord," said the captain, "and mean accordingly;" and he was then dismissed.

When the gallant Talbot reached the castle of the countess, he was ushered into her presence by the messenger who had visited him. "Is this the scourge of France?" exclaimed the lady. "Madam, it is," answered Talbot, with a low bow. "Then I see report is false," said the countess. "I thought I should have seen a Hercules of large proportions and well-knit limbs! Alas! this is a child, a silly dwarf. It cannot be, this weak shrimp should strike such terror to his enemies." Lord Talbot knew better the needs of courtesy than to resent such unmannerly speeches, and he only bowed the lower at the lady's coarse language, saying that since her ladyship was not at leisure he would find some other time to visit

her. He started to go, but was detained by the servant of the countess, who craved to know the cause of his abrupt departure. His lordship said he went to certify her that the real Talbot was there. "Then," cried the lady, triumphantly, "if you are he, you are a prisoner." "Prisoner! to whom?" dauntlessly asked Talbot. She told him to her, and said that it was for that purpose she had decoyed him to her house. A long time had his shadow been thrall to her, for his picture hung in her gallery; but now his substance should endure the like treatment, for she meant to chain up those legs and arms that had by tyranny wasted her country for so many years. Talbot laughed gaily at her boast, and told her that it rejoiced him to see her so fond as to think that she had aught but Talbot's shadow on which to practise her severity. "Why, are you not the man?" asked she. "I am, indeed," he replied. "Then I have substance too," she returned; but he laughed again at her assurance, and said that had she the whole frame there, it were of so lofty a pitch that her roof would not be sufficient to contain it. She wondered how such contrarieties could agree, and presently he showed her; for, winding a blast upon his horn, there came a sound of drums from without the castle and then a peal of cannon; next the gates were suddenly forced, and Lord Talbot's soldiers came thronging in. "How say you, madam?" he asked, "are you now persuaded that Talbot is but a shadow of himself?" He told her that these

were his substance, sinews, arms, and strength; and she, sorely astonished, was moved to ask his pardon for her abuse, saying she found he was no less than fame reported. Then, with courtly gallantry, this knight, whom she had called a silly dwarf, assured her that what she had done had not offended him, nor did he crave other satisfaction than a taste of wine and such delicacies as she might be able to provide, for soldiers' stomachs always served them well. "With all my heart," said she; "and think me honored to feast so great a warrior in my house."

In the mean time, the French, having lost Orleans, determined to march against Rouen; and one night, after they had arrived below its walls, the Maid of Orleans, with several soldiers disguised like countrymen and bearing market-sacks upon their backs, came to the city gates and knocked for admittance to the market. They were challenged by the guard within, but were careful to talk like the vulgar sort of marketmen, and so gained an entrance without trouble.

When she first set foot upon the streets of the city, La Pucelle exclaimed with triumph, "Now, Rouen, I'll shake your bulwarks to the ground!" and, full of hope and courage, led her followers to a tower, from a window of which she had agreed with the dauphin to thrust a torch, which should be a signal for the attack from without.

The dauphin with his generals and forces were on the watch for the signal, and immediately upon

its appearance they forced an entrance by the same gate where La Pucelle had entered, pealing forth their battle cry, "The dauphin!" and doing execution on the watch as they thronged into the town.

Aroused by the tumult, Lord Talbot and certain English troops came running up, and went into the town in pursuit of the French. There was a great clamor and noise of arms, and a vast concourse of opposing forces, out of which presently came the Duke of Bedford, uncle of the English king and regent of France, who was carried in a chair, being sick; and about him pressed Lord Talbot, the Duke of Burgundy, and the English forces.

As these paused under the walls, there came forth above La Pucelle; the dauphin Charles; the Bastard of Orleans; Alençon, and other French leaders; and stepping forward, the warlike Joan of Arc bid the English a mocking good-morrow and asked if they wanted corn for bread. The Duke of Burgundy, who, though a French nobleman, was loyal to the English, defied her, calling her fiend and courtesan, for so he and his allies thought this maid who had put off womanhood and could ride and fight like a warrior among men. Talbot, too, took up her challenge, crying, "Foul fiend of France and hag of all despite, I'll have a bout with you again, or else let Talbot perish with this shame." She sent back a taunting answer; but the English little heeded it, for

they had turned to consult together upon the course to be taken. After this Talbot advanced and cried aloud to those on the walls, "Dare ye come forth and meet us in the field?" The Maid's reply was, "Belike your lordship takes us then for fools, to try if our own be ours or no."

Led by Talbot, the Englishmen then swore an oath that they would get the town back or die, for King Henry had won it by force of arms said they, and in it was the heart of great Cœur de Lion buried, and it was very dear to all men of English blood.

Before they set about their warlike preparations, Talbot offered to bestow the valiant old Duke of Bedford in some place fitter for sickness and for crazy age; but the stout old soldier pleaded that they would not so dishonour him, saying that he would sit before the walls of Rouen and be a partner in the weal or woe of his countrymen. "Undaunted spirit in a dying breast, be it so!" said Talbot; then, turning to Burgundy, he bid him gather the forces and set upon the boasting enemy.

But before the attack had well begun Sir John Fastolfe retreated in great haste, and being overtaken by a certain captain, he told him that he meant to save himself by flight, for the English were again like to suffer an overthrow. "What!" said the captain, "will you fly, and leave Lord Talbot?" and Fastolfe replied that he would abandon all the Talbots in the world to save his

life. "Cowardly knight!" cried the brave captain. "Ill-fortune follow you." And they parted and went their several ways, just as La Pucelle and the French generals came forth the gates in flight before the victorious English.

At sight of this happy conclusion of the battle, the dying Bedford, satisfied at having seen his enemies overthrown, gave up the ghost, and his attendants carried his aged body away in the chair in which he had died.

Then came forth from the gates Talbot and all his followers, giving thanks to Heaven for such a victory, and wondering where now were the Bastard's braves and Charles and La Pucelle; for Rouen hung her head in grief that such a gallant company were fled. "Now will we make some order in the town, and then depart for Paris, to the king, for there young Harry lies with all his nobles," said Talbot. But before he went, this stout warrior, whose gallant heart ever exalted bravery in others, ordered a fitting funeral for the dead Duke of Bedford, than whom, he said, a braver soldier never couched lance nor a gentler heart never swayed in court.

The French in their flight from Rouen had reached a plain some distance from the city; and there encamped, they counselled together over their defeat. "Let frantic Talbot triumph for a while, and sweep along his tail like a peacock," said the crestfallen Pucelle; "we'll pull his plumes and take away his train, if the dauphin and the

rest will be but ruled." The dauphin still believed in the Maid's heavenly guidance, and told her that one sudden foil should not breed distrust; while the Bastard and Alençon prayed her, with promises of fame and vows to raise her statue in some holy place, that she would employ herself for their good. She said there was but one way to achieve victory: they must entice the Duke of Burgundy with fair pursuasions, mixed with sugar words, to leave Talbot and follow them. This seemed hopeless to the dauphin; but she said they should see how she would work to bring the matter to the wished-for end; and, happily for her purpose, just at that same instant of time the trumpets were heard which led the English in their march to Paris.

The long lines of Talbot's soldiery, with all their colors spread, soon came into sight in the distance; and after them, preceded by trumpets playing a French march, came the Duke of Burgundy and his forces, whom, the Maid begged fortune, might be made to lag behind. She then commanded a parley to be sounded while she advanced to talk with the duke.

When, at her earnest entreaty, Burgundy stopped to listen to her plea, she begged him in words which held enchantment, to look upon his country and see how the towns and cities were defaced by wasting ruin of the cruel foe. "See the pining malady of France," she cried; "behold the most unnatural wounds which you have

given her woful breast. O turn your edged sword another way; strike those that hurt, and hurt not those that help!" Thus imploring, she wrought so deeply upon the yielding heart of the duke that he confessed himself bewitched and immediately relented. She followed up her advantage by picturing the state of his native land were English Harry crowned its king, and by appealing to his jealousy against the English; till presently he cried out that he was vanquished and asked forgiveness of his country and sweet countrymen. He embraced in turn all his fellow-nobles of France, and told them that henceforward his power of men and all his forces were theirs. "So farewell, Talbot," quoth he; "I'll no longer trust you." The Maid of Orleans cried, "Done like a Frenchman!" while the dauphin Charles welcomed the duke warmly into his ranks.

Having thus won a powerful reinforcement and deprived the enemy of a chief ally, the French were mightily encouraged and set forward at once, seeking how they might best prejudice the foe.

But, in the mean time, Lord Talbot and his forces had reached Paris, and his lordship sought an audience with King Henry in the palace there, that he might, as he said, do his duty to his sovereign; in sign of which his arm, which had reclaimed to the English throne fifty fortresses, twelve cities, and seven walled towns of strength, let fall his sword before the king's feet; and with submissive loyalty of heart, he ascribed the glory of

his conquests first to his God and next to the king. Turning to his uncle Gloster, King Henry asked if this were the Lord Talbot that had so long been resident in France; and when he was told that it was the same valiant knight, he gave him hearty welcome, and graciously remembered that, when he was young, his father had told him that a stouter champion never handled sword. Then he thanked Talbot for his faithful service which had never yet been rewarded, and bid him stand up, whereupon he created him, for his good deserts, Earl of Shrewsbury, and ordered that he should take his place at his coronation.

This ceremony occurred a few days later, and at its close, came hastening into the room of state Sir John Fastolfe, saying he had ridden from Calais to deliver to his gracious sovereign a letter from the Duke of Burgundy.

The impetuous Talbot cried shame on the duke and on Fastolfe, and, as he had vowed he would do when he next met this false knight, he boldly tore the insignia of the garter from his leg. Then he turned with deep submission to the king and the rest and asked pardon for his act, saying that, at the battle of Patay, when he was but six thousand strong and the French had ten to one, this craven knight had run away before a stroke was given; and he asked them to judge whether he had done amiss, or whether a coward ought to wear such an ornament of knighthood.

The king was incensed against the dastardly

traitor, and instantly banished him, and he went humbled from the presence. Then King Henry bid the Lord Protector to view the letter which this Fastolfe had brought from his uncle of Burgundy; and when the seal was broken, it was found to contain, in a few blunt words, the duke's recantation of his alliance with the English. "Why, then," said the king, "Lord Talbot shall give him chastisement;" and Talbot eagerly undertook the task, setting out immediately to gather strength and march against the rebel and his forces.

He proceeded first to Bordeaux and demanded its surrender, but here he met with resistance, and while he held parley with the French general whom he had summoned to the walls, drums were sounded afar off, which, when he heard, this officer knew them to be the joyful tidings that the dauphin was approaching to his relief.

Talbot and his force also heard the drums, and they knew that it could be none other than the dauphin whose army had thus surprised them and cut off their retreat. But the hearts of English soldiers ever grow stouter with the approach of danger, and every warrior of Talbot's force resolved to sell his life as dear as might be.

Now, the Duke of York and the Duke of Somerset, who were also in the field against the French, should long before this have come to Lord Talbot's relief; but they were the leaders of the opposing factions of the houses of Lancaster and of York, and so jealous and suspicious were

they of each other that Somerset had wilfully failed to send to York a supply of horsemen which had been promised him. With this for an excuse, the Duke of York told Talbot's messenger, who now appealed to him for aid, that he could offer none. A like reply was given by the Duke of Somerset when the messenger approached him, for he alleged that this expedition was too rashly plotted by York and Talbot, and that Talbot had sullied in this venture all his gloss of former honour.

In the mean while, Lord Talbot had encamped and held his ground near Bordeaux, and his young son, John Talbot, whom he had sent for to tutor him in the stratagems of war, arrived just on the eve of a battle with the French. "O malignant and ill-boding stars!" cried Lord Talbot upon seeing his beloved son, for he knew that the youth had come unto a feast of death and a terrible and unavoided danger. He bid him, therefore, mount on his swiftest horse, and said he would direct him how to escape. "Is my name Talbot, and am I your son? And shall I fly?" asked the courageous boy, in surprise at his father's fear. His father pleaded with him to save himself so that the son might live to revenge the father's death if he were slain; for that if both stayed, both were sure to die. "Then let me stay, and do you fly," said the boy; and he would yield to no argument, though his father pictured to him all the terrors of the fight, and prayed, for his mother's sake, that he would go.

At last, seeing that it would pain him more to retire than to face death, the father tenderly took leave of him, and they swore they would live or die together, and entered the battle which was on the eve of beginning.

The boy did mighty acts of valor on the field, and so proud was his father to see him strike fire with a sword-blow upon the dauphin's crest, that he himself was quickened with a redoubled strength and beat down Alençon, Orleans, and Burgundy, and at last rescued his son from the ireful Bastard of Orleans, who had wounded and was about to despatch him.

But the fortunes of war are ever uncertain, and before very long Talbot himself was wounded; which seeing, his son, like a hungry lion, began rough deeds of rage upon the enemy. Then, when he had driven off those who aimed at his father's life, he plunged with sudden fury and rage of heart into the clustering battle of the French, and, wielding his sword, there met his death.

Lord Talbot's heart was broken by his son's fall, and he accused the shade of antic death, that laughed him there to scorn. "Anon, the Talbots shall escape from thy insulting tyranny," were his last bitter words; after uttering which, he bid his faithful soldiers adieu, and expired in their arms.

But though the French thus prevailed in the battle before Bordeaux, they were not long to profit by their victory, for in a brief time the opposing forces met again before Angiers, and the

Frenchmen were promptly put to flight by the English regent. In this action the Maid of Orleans and the Duke of York met hand to hand, and after a deadly combat La Pucelle was taken by the duke, who mockingly bid her try if her evil spells could give her liberty, and he heaped upon her many more taunts, to which she made bold replies, for she felt secure of the supernatural aid which had ever before stood her in good stead.

But in spite of her inspired mission to overcome the English and rid France of its foes, Joan of Arc was carried a prisoner to the camp of the Duke of York in Anjou, and there she showed some traits of pride which ill assorted with her heavenly calling. For when a certain old shepherd, hearing of her capture, presented himself in the camp as her father, which without doubt he was, she pretended not to know him, and called him a decrepit miser and a base wretch, saying she was descended of gentler blood, and that he was neither father nor friend of hers. The old man was moved to tears by her unfilial words, and said her mother, who was living yet, could bear witness that she was their child. The Maid, however, would none of him; and thus the pity which her virgin adventures and her present misfortunes might have awakened in the gallant English hearts was turned to aversion. For there is nothing meaner than an ambition to appear that which we are not, or to build, whether truly or falsely, upon birth, that which alone should be

built upon character. This the duke and his soldiers felt, and hence they argued that her life had been wicked and vile; for which reason, and because he really desired to remove a powerful enemy, the duke ordered her instant death.

The old shepherd, her father, begged her now to kneel down and take his blessing; but she would not stoop to him, and his benediction was turned to a curse, for he cried out, "O burn her, burn her; hanging is too good!" upon which the duke bid her guards to take her away, for he said she had lived too long to fill the world with vicious qualities.

Joan of Arc then burst forth into a passionate defence of herself, saying that she had been virtuous and holy, and chosen from above by inspiration of celestial grace to work exceeding miracles on the earth, and that her maiden blood would cry for vengeance at the gates of heaven.

But the stern duke was inflexible. He ordered her burnt at the stake; yet in deference to her maidenhood, told his officers to spare no fagots nor pitch, that her torture might be shortened; and thus this Maid, who had caused the English more loss and injury than the dauphin and all his forces beside, was led out to execution amid the curses of her captors.

It was not long after this time that a messenger from the dauphin came to the Duke of York, who was now the lord regent of France, asking an interview for his master, and saying that the states

of Christendom, moved with remorse of the outrageous broils of England and France, earnestly implored a general peace between them. Upon the messenger's heels came Charles himself attended by his nobles, and to his plea for peace the Bishop of Winchester, at the regent's request, made answer that King Henry, out of compassion towards France, would give consent to ease the land of distressful war provided Charles should become a liegeman to the English crown and pay tribute, in which case he should be placed as a viceroy under King Henry and still enjoy his regal dignity.

The French nobles murmured against these hard conditions, and the dauphin said it was well known already that he was possessed with more than half the French territories and reverenced as their lawful king. Should he, therefore, he asked, detract so much from that prerogative as to be called but viceroy of the whole? And he chose rather to keep that which he had than, coveting more, be cast from the possibility of possessing all.

This frank rejoinder angered the Duke of York, who blamed the dauphin for using intercession to obtain a league with him, and then standing thus aloof; and he threatened him with incessant wars if he did not accept the offered terms.

Then the French nobles, little relishing a renewal of the warfare in which they had been so often worsted, pleaded with the dauphin to agree to the truce, saying it was his best policy to save

his subjects from massacre and ruthless slaughters; and, in secret, they whispered that he might easily break the compact when his pleasure served.

As Charles was himself not loath to have the fighting done he at last consented on the sole condition that the English should claim no interest in any of his towns or garrisons. This was acceptable to the duke, and he bid the dauphin then swear allegiance to his majesty King Henry VI. of England, and, as he was a knight, never to disobey nor be rebellious to the English crown.

The dauphin and all his nobles gave tokens of fealty, and then retired to dismiss their forces and lay down their arms; and thus, for the time, was a solemn peace covenanted between the long-contending thrones of France and England.

KING HENRY VI.—PART II.

AS was the custom in the days of King Henry the Sixth, the handsome Marquess of Suffolk, a favorite of the king, was sent into France to marry by proxy the princess who had been chosen to share the throne of England with the young ruler. She was a fair maiden, daughter to Reignier, King of Naples, Sicily, and Jerusalem, and King Henry had chosen her upon the report of Lord Suffolk, who not only praised her beauty, but plausibly represented that a match with one of the allies of France would confirm the peace lately made with the dauphin Charles, and serve to hold the Frenchmen in the allegiance they had sworn to the English crown.

In fulfilling his courtly mission, the marquess had journeyed to the ancient city of Tours, and there, in the presence of many kings and nobles, had performed his task and was espoused. Then, with the newly-made bride, he started for England, where arriving, he bowed before King Henry and delivered up his title in the queen.

The king gave the Princess Margaret a royal welcome and thanked God for sending him, in her beauteous face, a world of earthly blessings. All the court kneeled down at this, crying, "Long live Queen Margaret!" and very graciously she thanked them; whereupon Suffolk handed to the lord protector, Duke Humphrey of Gloster, the articles of peace contracted by him for eighteen months between France and England. The duke read aloud the terms of the agreement, which were that King Henry should marry the Lady Margaret and crown her Queen of England before the thirtieth of May next ensuing; and that upon her nuptials the duchy of Anjou and the county of Maine, in France, should be released and delivered to her father.

As he read these unwonted concessions the lord protector showed his surprise and emotion at the sacrifice; and the king, seeing this, asked sharply, "How now, uncle?" But the duke was too wary to betray himself, and he asked pardon, saying some qualm had struck him at the heart, and dimmed his eyes so that he could read no more. The king then asked his uncle of Winchester to read on, which he did, to the effect that the princess should be sent to England at King Henry's cost, and that she should have no dowry.

King Henry said that these conditions pleased him well; and in recognition of his services in this gallant mission to France he bid the Lord Marquess of Suffolk to kneel down; whereupon he

created him the first Duke of Suffolk and girt him with the sword; but as the peace with France was now definitely concluded for eighteen months, he discharged his cousin of York from being regent in the parts of France for all that time.

When the king and queen were gone out, the nobles who had attended them fell to discourse about the late concessions to France; for, to such as had fought in the wars of the king's father or in those of his own reign for the very provinces now peacefully ceded back to the enemy, it was a cruel blow to see their hard-won conquests so diminished. Gloster predicted the final loss of all France, and the old Lord Salisbury and his son the valiant Earl of Warwick, were equally hopeless; but Cardinal Beaufort, great-uncle of the king and the sworn enemy of Gloster, opposed their views, and by his insinuating words tried to make them appear disloyal to the king.

After the lord protector, in some choler, had retired from the chamber, the cardinal accused him of being the enemy of all present and no great friend of the king, for that he was the heir-apparent to the English crown; and he urged them with his malicious arguments to look to it that Gloster's smoothing words bewitch not their hearts; for though the common people favored him, calling him "Humphrey the good Duke of Gloster," yet, he said, he feared he would be found a dangerous protector. The Duke of Buckingham, who was on the side of the cardinal, asked why the

duke should any longer protect the sovereign, he being himself of age to govern, and he urged his cousin, the Duke of Somerset, to join with him and the Duke of Suffolk to quickly hoist Duke Humphrey from his seat.

Then, to show the deep intrigue and suspicion which prevailed in the court, when anon the haughty cardinal went out, Somerset attacked him in turn, and warned the rest to watch him, for his insolence was, he said, more intolerable than all the princes in the land beside, and if Gloster were displaced, the cardinal would be protector; but the Duke of Buckingham said that either he or Somerset would be protector despite Duke Humphrey or the cardinal. When these last had also left the room, the old Lord Salisbury and his son Warwick held converse with the Duke of York their ally, and they agreed that they would join together for the public good, doing what they could to bridle and suppress the pride of Suffolk and the cardinal, and the ambition of Somerset and Buckingham; but cherishing as best they might the deeds of Duke Humphrey. After this Salisbury and his son went forth, and left York to his own reflections, which were upon the wrong done him and his house of York by the usurpation of the throne by the house of Lancaster; and within himself brooding deeply, he said, "A day shall come when York shall claim his own." Therefore he decided to take the part of the Nevils, the family name of Salisbury and Warwick, and make a show of love

to proud Duke Humphrey; but when he spied advantage, he meant to claim the crown,—for that was the golden mark he sought above all else to hit,—and raise aloft the milk-white rose, symbol of the House of York.

But if the good Duke Humphrey had enemies in the court, he had a greater danger in his own household, for his wife, the duchess, was of an overweening ambition and had set her heart upon ascending the throne of England, to which her husband was the heir-apparent. He bid her, again and again, to banish the canker of ambitious thoughts from her mind, and said that when he imagined ill to his virtuous nephew Henry, he hoped it might be with his last breathing in this mortal world. And when she told him a vain-glorious dream of her sitting in the chair where kings and queens are crowned, he chid her roundly for her presumption, and pointed out all the blessings she already possessed that should satisfy her with her exalted lot. "And wilt thou still be hammering treachery to tumble down thy husband and thyself from top of honor to disgrace's feet?" he asked, and waited not for an answer, but bid her say no more; yet when she showed signs of anger, he coaxed her into a compliant mood, losing all the advantage his reprimand had gained.

But just as the matter stood thus, a messenger came in saying it was the king's pleasure that the lord protector prepare to ride to St. Albans, where the king and queen meant to go hawking. The

duke said that he would go, and asked his wife to ride with him, but she said she would follow presently.

When Duke Humphrey had gone forth, the duchess cried to some one concealed, "Where are you there? Sir John! nay, fear not, man, we are alone;" and instantly Sir John Hume came from his hiding-place, saying, "Jesu preserve your royal majesty." Though the duchess was pleased by this title, yet she corrected him and said she was but grace, not majesty; whereupon he made answer that by the grace of God and his own advice her title should be multiplied. He told her he had arranged with certain sorcerers named Margery Jourdain and Roger Bolingbroke to show her highness a spirit raised from under ground that should make answer to such questions as should be propounded him. The duchess was well satisfied with this, saying she would think upon the questions, and when she returned from St. Albans the thing should be effected. Then, giving Hume a reward, she dismissed him. But Hume was a cunning villain, for while appearing to serve the duchess, he was really in the pay of Suffolk and the cardinal who had planned by means of his incriminating follies to drag down the good duke, her husband.

Hence it was that while the duke was still absent Hume led his confederates Bolingbroke, Margery Jourdain, and Southwell to the garden of the duke's house, where they met the duchess

who had found means to elude her husband, and received from her a warm welcome. Without delay they performed the ceremonies of their witchcraft, and made a circle in which the spirit was to appear. As Bolingbroke and Southwell read a Latin incantation it began to thunder and lighten, then the spirit arose majestically, but showed its evil origin by trembling at the name of God when it was spoken by Margery Jourdain. "Ask what thou wilt," it said; and Bolingbroke questioned what should befall the king. The answer was, "The duke yet lives that Henry shall depose, but him outlive and die a violent death." "What fate awaits the Duke of Suffolk?" was the next question; and the reply was that he should die by water. Then Bolingbroke asked what should befall Somerset. "Let him shun castles; safer shall he be upon the sandy plains," said the spirit; upon which it bid the conjurors have done, for it could hardly endure any more. They then commanded it to descend to darkness and the burning lake, and, with another peal of thunder and lightning, it vanished into the earth.

But at the same instant of time the Dukes of York and Buckingham attended by their guards ran hastily into the midst of the group and laid violent hands upon the traitors, as they called them, arresting at the same time the Duchess of Gloster, and gathering up the papers on which her questions and the spirit's answers had been written. Here was a pretty plot, well chosen for

them to build upon, and after they had read the papers they had secured, York said, as the king was now in progress towards St. Albans, and Duke Humphrey in his company, that the news should go thither to him as fast as horse could carry it. Buckingham asked that he might be chosen to be the post, in hope of the king's reward; and, York assenting, he started forward at a gallop, while York hastened to tell the Lords Salisbury and Warwick of his discovery.

When Buckingham arrived at St. Albans he found the king and queen surrounded by their nobles, in converse upon the fortunes of the day at hawking; but he could well see that all had not been friendly between the cardinal and Suffolk and Duke Humphrey, for though their words and courtesies were faultless yet their evil intent showed through the gloss of speech and mien.

"What tidings with our cousin Buckingham?" asked King Henry; and the travel-worn duke, feigning to be loath to deliver his news, said that it was such as his heart trembled to unfold. Then with affected hesitation he revealed the doings of the Duchess of Gloster and her confederates in the duke's garden, and repeated the questions and answers between the spirit and the duchess.

This was welcome evidence for the cardinal, and he showed no mercy in taunting the unfortunate duke. "And so," said he, "by this means your lady was delayed at London?" But Duke Hum-

phrey, pained to the soul by these exposures of his wife's folly, bid him gravely not further to afflict his heart, for sorrow and grief had vanquished all his powers." King Henry, who really loved his uncle Gloster, was much affected by the evil tidings; but his queen, plotting and ambitious, had been haughtily affronted by the duchess, and being, as well, jealous of the duke's power in the realm, was bitter in her comments. "Behold the taint in thy nest," she said, "and look that thou thyself be faultless." Gloster's reply was nobly worded, and he said that if his wife had forgot honor and virtue he would banish her from his bed and company and give her as a prey to law and shame. Then the king said that for the night he would stay at St. Albans, but on the morrow set out toward London and look thoroughly into this business.

And thus it fell out, for Eleanor Cobham, wife to Gloster, was brought before the king and his lords, and duly tried at the bar of justice for her treasonous words against the throne. She was found guilty and sentenced to be despoiled of her honours; and, after three days open penance, to live in banishment under the guard of Sir John Stanley on the Isle of Man. But the others were adjudged to be hung, saving the witch, who was burned at the stake in Smithfield.

The poor Duke of Gloster was bowed down with grief, but he said to his wife that he could not justify whom the law condemned. "Ah,

Humphrey," quoth he, "this dishonour in thine age will bring thy head with sorrow to the ground," and he besought his majesty to let him go, for sorrow needed solace and his age ease.

But a bitter blow was still to come, for the king commanded him, ere he left, to give up his staff of office, saying he would himself be protector; yet he bid the old grief-stricken duke go in peace, and told him he was no less beloved than when he was protector to his king.

Gloster then gave the king his staff, as willingly resigning the same, he said, as e'er the king's father Henry made it his. Then he gave his majesty farewell and turned mournfully away.

The queen and Lord Suffolk were rejoiced at all this, for they were cruel hearts and loved nothing but power and their own vain selves. They therefore turned joyfully from the heart-broken old lord to a combat between two low-born fellows who had been set this task by the king to determine which was guilty of saying that the Duke of York was rightful heir to the throne.

No further sympathy was expended upon Gloster, for the sport ran high and the whole court gave itself up to the brutal combat; but the aged duke put on a mourning cloak and went forth with his servants to watch the coming of his punished duchess. And he grieved to think of her tender feet torn by the flinty stones, and of the abject people gazing on her face with laughter, who erst did follow her proud chariot wheels.

As he mourned thus, he saw her, in a white sheet, with papers pinned upon her back and a taper burning in her hand, come in her bare feet along the street. His loyal servants offered to take her from the sheriff by force; but the duke commanded them, for their lives, to let her pass.

She looked on him sadly and asked if he came to see her open shame; but he only besought her tenderly to be patient and forget this grief. "Ah, Gloster," groaned she, "teach me to forget myself;" and though, by her folly, she had brought upon herself this deep affliction, yet she reproached him for standing by while she was made a wonder to every idle rascal follower; and she predicted, because he was mild and blushed not for her shame, that the axe of death would shortly hang over him.

He said that she aimed all awry, for he must offend before he could be accused, and that if he had twenty times the foes she said he had, all these could not procure him any harm so long as he was loyal, and true, and crimeless; but he bid her rather to sort her heart with patience, for her few days of public shame would be quickly worn.

And now, while they talked thus, a herald from the king came up and summoned the duke to his majesty's parliament, to be held at Bury the first of the next month.

Gloster's consent to this measure had not been asked, and it was a sore surprise to him thus to learn of it; but he said he would be there, and the herald departed. Then, imploring Sir John Stan-

ley to treat his wife not the worse in that he prayed mercy for her, the duke and his servants took their way along the street and left her with the officers of the law.

When the time arrived for the assembly of the parliament at the Abbey at Bury, the king and all his nobles, saving only the Duke of Somerset and Duke Humphrey of Gloster, were promptly in attendance; and they marvelled much that Gloster was not punctual, for, said the king, it was not his wont to be the hindmost man. But while they awaited him, those who were secretly his enemies endeavored to poison the mind of the king against him by reciting suspicious looks and acts. The queen said he bore himself of late with an unwonted majesty and insolence, though but a little space before he was mild and affable; and she warned the king to note that he was near him in descent, and that therefore it was impolitic that he be allowed to come about his royal person, or be admitted to the council. She excused herself for her seeming enmity, and said it was due to the reverent care she bore her lord. Then she appealed to the Lords Suffolk, Buckingham, and York, and the cardinal to reprove her allegation or else to support it. This latter they gladly did, each in turn bringing forward some plausible accusation which none could deny, false though it might be; till the king, pained to the heart yet impotent in these crafty hands, thanked them for the care they had for him, but spoke frankly forth his belief that his kinsman

Gloster was as innocent from meaning treason to his royal person as is the sucking lamb or harmless dove. For he said the duke was virtuous, mild, and too true to dream of evil or to work his downfall. The queen would have questioned all this; but at the moment the Duke of Somerset approached the presence crying all health unto his gracious sovereign. King Henry gave him cordial welcome and asked for news from France; which with a bowed head his lordship gave, for all the king's interest in the territories of France was utterly bereft him, and all was lost. "Cold news, Lord Somerset: but God's will be done," said the pious king; and further tidings of the disaster were cut short by the entrance of Gloster, who humbly asked pardon that he had stayed so long. "Nay, Gloster," said Suffolk, stepping forth, "know that thou art come too soon. I do arrest thee of high treason."

The good Duke Humphrey was so secure in his own sense of innocence that he was not alarmed greatly at this turn of fortune, and, turning towards King Henry, he said that the purest spring is not so free from mud as he was clear from treason. Then he asked who could accuse him and wherein he was guilty. The Duke of York said that it was thought he had taken bribes from France. "Is it but thought so?" asked Gloster, and he said, so help him God, as he had watched night by night in studying good for England, he had not hoarded any groat to his own use, but rather had dispensed

many a pound of his own proper store to the garrisons.

Seeing that little could be gained for their cause by such unfounded accusations as this, Suffolk came to the rescue of his confederates York and the cardinal, and brushing them aside said that such faults were quickly answered, but that mightier crimes were laid to the duke's charge whereof he could not so easily purge himself, and for these he arrested him in the king's name and there committed him to the lord cardinal to keep until the time of his trial.

The weak king, powerless to undo this great wrong, said he hoped the lord of Gloster would clear himself from all suspicions, for that his conscience told him he was innocent; yet he made no effort to save his good uncle from the doom which his enemies had plotted against him, and let them carry him away from his presence with no response to his noble warning: "Ah, thus King Henry throws away his crutch before his legs be firm to bear his body!" and again he sighed: "Ah, that my fear were false, for, good King Henry, I fear thy decay!"

When Gloster was gone the king could no longer conceal his grief, and, rising, he bid his lords do what in their wisdom seemed best. "What! will your highness leave the parliament?" asked the queen, and Henry answered with deep sadness that his body was round engirt with misery. "Ah, uncle Humphrey!" exclaimed he, "I see

the map of honour, truth, and loyalty in thy face!" and he bewailed his hard lot with sad unhelpful tears and with dimmed eyes that looked after the old duke and could not do him good, so mighty were his vowed enemies. Then this ruler more feeble than his meanest subject went forth from the parliament, and left the fate of his beloved uncle and wise councillor in the hands of his foes, who speedily condemned him to death, the cardinal, his jailer, offering to provide an executioner if the rest would consent. The Duke of Suffolk, the queen, and the Duke of York were eager for it, and reached forth their hands to the cardinal in sign of agreement.

But they were interrupted in their plotting by the entrance of a messenger from Ireland, who brought news that the rebels there were up and had put the Englishmen to the sword. He begged them to send succours and stop the rage before the wound grew incurable. The lords knew that such a breach needed a quick remedy, and the cardinal asked the Duke of York to try his fortune in leading an army thither, which York readily assented to do, with the king's leave. "Why, our authority is his consent," said Suffolk, and York was content to go provided they furnished him with soldiers at Bristol within fourteen days, for there he said he would ship for Ireland.

Upon this agreement all went forth, leaving York to his own reflections. "Well, nobles," thought he, with inward satisfaction, "'twas politicly done to send me packing with a host of men.

I fear me you but warm the starved snake, who, being cherished in your breasts, will sting your hearts!" For it was men that this ambitious lord most lacked, and now he would have a host of them; and while in Ireland he was nourishing a mighty band, he resolved to stir up a black storm in England, which should not cease to rage until he wore the golden circlet of kingship on his head. To this end he had seduced a headstrong Kentishman named John Cade to make commotions under the title of John Mortimer, the dead heir to the crown, whom in all things he resembled; and by this means the duke meant to test the mind of the commons and perceive how they affected the house of York; and if Cade throve in his rebellion, then the duke planned to come from Ireland with all his strength and reap the harvest sowed by this rascal; for Humphrey being dead and Henry put apart, the next heir to the throne was himself.

Following out this plan, York in due time posted for Ireland, leaving the execution of the plot against Duke Humphrey to his fellow-conspirators, and these were not slow to see it performed.

Gloster had been imprisoned at Bury, and thither Lord Suffolk sent two of his followers secretly to put him to death. This they speedily did, and when the grim deed was done they ran in very dread to announce it to Suffolk. "Why, that's well said," quoth the heartless duke, and he bid them go to his house, where he would reward them anon, for the king and all his peers were at hand and he

must first welcome them. "Have you laid fair the bed, and are all things well?" he asked the murderers as they went out, and they answered yes, and were gone.

When the king and queen with their train arrived at Bury, King Henry's first act was to send one to call his uncle of Gloster to his presence, for that he intended to try him that day. Suffolk said he would call him presently; and after he had gone out for the purpose, the king bid his lords to take their places, and he prayed them all to proceed no straiter against his uncle Gloster than from true evidence he were proven culpable. The dissembling queen said God forbid that any malice should prevail, and for this the too-confiding Henry thanked her, saying her words contented him much.

In a little space Suffolk came back without the duke, trembling and looking very pale. The king asked in some alarm, "Where is our uncle? What's the matter, Suffolk?" and the crafty duke, who could ill conceal his horror of the sight he had seen, said, "Dead in his bed, my lord; Gloster is dead!" The queen, half in dread and half for concealment of her part in the murder, cried, "Marry, God forefend!" and the wicked cardinal murmured, "God's secret judgment!" But the king had swooned at the news, and Queen Margaret flew to his side crying he was dead and imploring the lords for help. "Rear up his body," said Suffolk, and presently the king revived, mut-

tering as he came back to consciousness, "O heavenly God!" "How fares my gracious lord?" tenderly asked the queen, and Lord Suffolk bid him take comfort. "What!" exclaimed the king, "doth my Lord of Suffolk comfort me? Hide not thy poison with sugared words. Lay not thy hands on me; their touch affrights me as a serpent's sting!" and he recoiled from the duke's presence as if he were some loathsome beast. The queen chid King Henry for rating Suffolk thus, and said that he lamented the duke's death, though he was his enemy; and she herself affected to weep tears of pity for his taking off. From her, too, the king then turned away, and this smote her conscience, for the planning of an evil deed too often leaves out of sight the awful twinge of conscience, a worse punishment than any devised by man, and this the queen now deeply felt. As she pleaded with the king to give her again his love and confidence, the noise of a murmuring crowd was heard without doors, and the Earls of Warwick and Salisbury presently broke into the room, crying that the commons had heard report that the good Duke Humphrey had been traitorously murdered by Suffolk and Cardinal Beaufort's means, and like an angry hive of bees had come thither for their leader. "That he is dead," said the king, "is too true; but how he died, God knows, not Henry," and he told them to enter his chamber and view the duke's corpse and then to comment on his sudden death.

Warwick bid Salisbury stay with the rude multitude till he returned, and then went into the inner room where Duke Humphrey's body lay. Immediately he threw open the folding doors, and called upon the king to come thither and view the body; and he said, as surely as his soul intended to live above, he did believe that violent hands were laid upon the life of this thrice-famed duke. Suffolk asked what instance he could give of this. "See," said Warwick, "how the blood is settled in his face, and he stares full ghastly like a strangled man. His hair is upreared, his nostrils stretched and struggling, and his hands abroad displayed, as one who grasped and tugged for life." Suffolk, with well-feigned innocence, asked who should do the duke to death, for he said himself and Beaufort had him in protection, and he hoped they were no murderers.

Egged on by the queen, these two nobles at last drew their swords and would have fallen upon each other over the good duke's corpse; but the voices of the crowd without grew clamorous, and Salisbury at last burst in holding the door against the mob. "Sirs," he cried to them, "stand back; the king shall know your mind;" then turning to the king, he said the commons sent word by him that unless Lord Suffolk straight were put to death or banished from England they would tear him by violence from the palace and torture him with a grievous, lingering death.

Lord Suffolk pretended to think this was the

invention of his enemies Warwick and Salisbury; but the king bid the latter go and tell the tumultuous commons that he thanked them for their loving care, and even if he had not been asked by them, he purposed to do as they entreated, for he said his thoughts hourly prophesied mischance to his state through Suffolk, and therefore he swore he should breathe infection into that air but three days longer on pain of death.

The queen, who was secretly in love with Suffolk, pleaded for him with all her might; but King Henry said she would thus only add increase to his wrath; and turning to the duke, his majesty firmly repeated the sentence; whereupon, calling Warwick to his side, he passed out, leaving the conspirators in dismay at his sudden show of strength.

The queen was smitten with grief at the loss of her gallant. She heaped tender words upon him, and in her passionate regret even kissed his hand; but the mandate of the king was inexorable, and at last they parted with many soft consolations, which, had the king suspected, he had long ago forbid his court to this deceitful and criminal lord. As they were about to go their several ways, Vaux, a servant of the royal household, passed by, and the queen asked him whither he went so fast. He said his errand was to signify to the king that Cardinal Beaufort was at the point of death, for suddenly a grievous sickness had overtaken him that made him stare and gasp and catch the air, blaspheming God and cursing men,

and sometimes he talked as if Duke Humphrey's ghost were at his bedside; sometimes called the king and whispered to his pillow, thinking it was his majesty, the secrets of his overcharged soul.

Vaux hurried on and the unlawful lovers parted, and anon came forward the king, Salisbury, Warwick, and others, who went in to the cardinal. They found him tossing in great agony and raving about the death of Duke Humphrey. The king prayed silently for the soul of the wretched prelate, and the rest, with few words, watched his tortured spirit pass. "So bad a death argues a monstrous life," said Warwick; but the pious king bid them forbear to judge, for he said all were sinners; and he commanded the attendants to close up the cardinal's eyes and draw the curtains close; then, with the rest, he passed out to meditation.

The exiled Duke of Suffolk, upon parting with the queen, had assumed a disguise and started for France; and he was well on his journey across the channel, when the boat in which he sailed was captured by pirates and all its passengers made prisoners. The pirates bore them speedily back to the sea-shore near Dover, and there landed them that they might secure ransom for their release. The Duke of Suffolk fell to the portion of one Walter Whitmore, who, having lost an eye in boarding the ship, desired to take instant revenge upon his prisoner; but the captain of the pirate crew urged him to accept ransom, and the duke bid him look on his George, an insignia of

his nobility, and to rate him at what he would, and it should be paid.

"And so am I a gentleman, and my name is Walter Whitmore," said the pirate; at which the duke started and grew pale, for he remembered the prophecy of the spirit to the Duchess of Gloster, that he should die by water, and as the name Walter in that day was pronounced Water, he feared that it was his doom to die by this pirate's hand.

And thus, indeed, it proved, for when, later, the captain and his fellows learned that it was the hated Duke of Suffolk whom they had captured, there was no plea that could prevent them from taking his life; and with a savage pleasure, born of revenge and of the popular enmity towards this same lord, they bore him to their long-boat's side and struck off his head, Whitmore crying, "There let his head and lifeless body lie until the queen bury it!" But when the pirates had gone back to their ship, the prisoners who had been ransomed took up Suffolk's body and bore it to London to the queen, who, without ceasing, mourned over and caressed the head of her slain lover.

Just at the same time came news to the king that the rebels were up in Southwark, and that there a certain Jack Cade proclaimed himself Lord Mortimer, descended from the Duke of Clarence, and called King Henry a usurper. Cade's army was a ragged multitude of hinds and peasants; but having slain Sir Humphrey Stafford and his brother,

who were sent against them, they had taken new courage to proceed in their violence.

The Duke of Buckingham urged the king to retire to Killingworth until a power were raised to put the mob down, and this he speedily did, while Buckingham and the old Lord Clifford went forth to quell the riot. They appealed to the commons in the king's name and called upon them to show their loyalty by abandoning Cade, and with the unsteady impulse of a mob the people threw up their hats and cried, "God save the king!" But when Cade, in his turn, addressed them, they shouted, "We'll follow Cade!" until, aroused to a new allegiance by old Clifford's promise that, with King Henry at their head, they should reconquer France, they shouted, "A Clifford! we'll follow the king and Clifford!" and thus Cade, being finally abandoned by his followers, was left to his own devices, and secretly fled away.

Buckingham and Clifford then led the multitude, each man with a halter about his neck in sign of submission, to Killingworth Castle, and there the king came forth and thanked them for their loyalty, granting pardon to all and dismissing them to their several counties.

But just as this danger was averted another threatened the unfortunate king, for tidings were brought him now that the Duke of York was newly come from Ireland with a puissant and mighty power of Gallowglasses and stout Kernes, rude warriors of that country, and that he was marching

towards London in proud array, but still proclaiming as he went along that his aim was only to remove from the king the Duke of Somerset, whom he termed a traitor.

King Henry in all haste sent the Duke of Buckingham forward to meet York, and to assure him that he had committed the Duke of Somerset to the Tower, which he did immediately; though he secretly told Somerset that he should be released when York had dismissed his army.

But when Lord Buckingham met the Duke of York and gave him the king's message, the ambitious heir to the throne was exceedingly angry thus to be robbed of an excuse for his invasion. He nevertheless disbanded his army, and went forward to London in all haste with Buckingham.

But, as fate would have it, as York and Buckingham entered the king's presence, Queen Margaret came thither with Lord Somerset, and King Henry, alarmed that the deadly foes should thus meet and ashamed that his deceit should be discovered, sent Buckingham to warn the queen and bid her hide Somerset from his enemy. This she haughtily refused to do; and when Lord York saw the hated duke at liberty and in her company, he flew into a mighty rage and loosed his long-imprisoned thoughts. "False king," he cried, "why hast thou broken faith with me?' and he heaped all manner of reproaches upon his majesty, saying at last that he should rule no more over

him, whom heaven had created, rather, to be the ruler of the king.

Upon this bold outburst Somerset arrested the duke on the charge of capital treason against the king and crown, and commanded him to kneel for grace. But York defied him, and sent for his sons to be his bail. Then the queen called for Clifford, the trusty servant of the king, and as he and his courageous son came in at one side, Edward and Richard Plantagenet, sons of the Duke of York, appeared at the other. There was much contention between the opposing leaders, and Clifford would have arrested the duke; but he was prevented by the show of force against him, and presently this was increased by the arrival of the Lords Warwick and Salisbury, who were allies of the house of York. The king asked Warwick if he had forgot to bow, and chided the old Lord Salisbury for his show of disloyalty, and he bid him in duty to bend the knee to him; but the venerable earl said he had considered with himself the title of Lord York, and in his conscience reputed his grace to be the rightful heir to England's throne. "Hast thou not sworn allegiance to me?" asked King Henry, and the earl answered that he had; but on doing it he had been mistaken; whereupon the king called for Buckingham and bid him arm himself. York said he might call all the friends he had, but he was resolved for death or dignity; upon which the several factions went forth to prepare for the struggle for supremacy.

This took place at St. Albans, where a battle was fought in which Clifford, who led the king's forces, was slain by York, and Somerset by the duke's son Richard. The king and queen, thus forced to fly, retreated to London; but York and his son and the Earl of Warwick held the field. "Who can report of Salisbury?" asked the Duke of York, when the fighting had ceased. "This happy day is not itself, nor have we won one foot, if Salisbury is lost." Richard said he had helped him to his horse three times that day, and each time persuaded him from any further act; but still he had met him where the most danger was, and like rich hangings in a homely house, so, he said, was this valiant lord's will in his old feeble body.

But just at this same moment the old Lord Salisbury came up, and all hailed him with glad hearts, for kindly age and a good conscience had won him the veneration of all his peers.

It was his counsel that the king and his flying forces should be followed to London; and this sage advice, seconded by Warwick's, was accepted by the Duke of York without delay, and all went forward, hoping that more such glorious days as this victory of St. Albans were in store for them.

KING HENRY VI.—PART III.

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AFTER the battle of St. Albans, in which the Duke of York overcame the forces of King Henry the Sixth, the victorious duke pursued the king to London; for, through his descent from the Duke of Clarence, third son of Edward the Third, he laid claim to the throne of England, and meant to follow up his victory by dethroning the Lancastrian king.

By some secret means, the duke and his fellow nobles, wearing in their hats the white rose of the house of York, gained an entrance to the Parliament House, which was prepared for the reception of the king and queen, who were about to assemble the parliament. There, surrounded by the leaders of his army, the duke was persuaded by the Earl of Warwick, a bold and sagacious warrior, to assume the throne in very deed; for he urged him to possess the regal chair of the king in the midst of the Parliament House and to hold it even against Henry himself.

This the duke did, and at the same moment a

flourish of trumpets announced the approach of the king, who entered at the head of his courtiers, all wearing in their hats, as did also King Henry, the red rose of the house of Lancaster.

"My lords," cried the king, astonished at the duke's audacity, "look where the sturdy rebel sits, even in the chair of state! Belike he means to aspire to the crown and reign as king." Then he urged those about him, who had suffered in the wars stirred up by the duke, to seek their revenge, and they would have openly defied the duke but that the king's timid heart would not wait upon his impulsive words. He commanded York to descend from his throne and kneel for grace and mercy at his feet; but the duke said he was sovereign, and made no motion to resign the place, whereupon the opposing nobles fell to words over the respective rights of their leaders, and much blood was like to have been shed; but Warwick at last demanded of King Henry to prove his title to the throne; and this the king started to do, saying that Henry the Fourth got the crown by conquest. "It was by rebellion against his king!" quoth York; and so true was this that King Henry was conscience-smitten and for a moment could not proceed; for the fact was that there was little to choose in justice between the claims of the two houses.

But the powerful warriors, Clifford and Northumberland, came to the support of their king, and this revived his heart; but his momentary bold-

ness stood him in little stead, for the Earl of Warwick instantly stamped his foot and brought in a troop of his soldiers. Such a forcible argument as this was not to be answered save by submission; and Henry's unsteady purpose gave way. "Let me reign as king for my lifetime," pleaded he; and York said if he would confirm the crown to him and to his heirs he should reign in quiet while he lived. Henry was perforce content; but his acquiescence mightily displeased his loyal followers, who taxed him with doing a grievous wrong against the prince his son, and freely expressed their repugnance in indignant words.

Thus driven from his cause, the Lords Northumberland, Clifford, and Westmoreland went forth, leaving the king alone with his enemies. Upon this Henry sighed heavily; but, he told Warwick, not for himself, but for his son; and yet, he said, be it as it may; and he agreed to entail the crown to York and to his heirs forever on condition that he should remain king during his life, and that York neither by treason nor hostility should seek to put him down and reign himself. The duke willingly took this oath, and then rose from the throne; whereupon Warwick cried, "Long live King Henry!" and bid York embrace him.

Upon this the company of lords parted, York going to his castle in the north; Warwick promising to keep London with his soldiers; Norfolk going to his dukedom; and Montague to sea. "And

I," said the mournful king, "will go with grief and sorrow to the court."

But as King Henry was about to leave, the queen, greatly angered by the news she had heard of the king's shame, came sweeping in with the prince, scolding and storming at her husband's cowardice and unnatural conduct towards his son. Henry asked pardon of both, saying the Earl of Warwick and the duke had enforced him, whereat she grew wilder than ever, charging him with preferring his life before his honor; and she said that, seeing this was so, she there divorced herself both from his table and his bed until the act of parliament whereby her son was disinherited should be repealed. "The northern lords," she railed on, "that have forsworn thy colours will follow mine if once they see them spread; and spread they shall be, to thy foul disgrace, and utter ruin of the house of York!" Then she left him, carrying her son, the prince, with her, to join her army, which was already in the field.

Having succeeded thus far in his ambitious designs, the Duke of York now resolved to be king at once, or die. He proceeded to his seat, Sandal Castle in Yorkshire, and from there prepared to put in execution his secret designs against the throne.

When he was in the midst of this work, unexpected news reached him of the approach of the queen with all the northern lords, whose intent was to besiege him in his castle. The queen had in

her army, said the messenger, nearly twenty thousand men: while, to oppose this force, the duke could muster only five thousand; yet, stout-hearted as he ever was, he decided to meet the queen in the field rather than suffer a siege, and to this he was urged by his sons Edward and Richard and his uncles Sir John and Sir Hugh Mortimer, the latter of whom arrived just in time to support him at his need.

The queen's army advanced so quickly and its arrival was so unlooked for, that the youngest son of York, the little Earl of Rutland, with his tutor, was overtaken by it in the plains near the castle, and captured by Lord Clifford and a band of his soldiers. Clifford, whose father had been slain by York at St. Albans, was rejoiced to find this opportunity for revenge, and he bid the boy's tutor to go, for his priesthood, he said, saved his life; but for the brat of the accursed duke, as he called the trembling lad, he was doomed to die.

The soldiers bore the tutor away pleading for the boy's life; and when Clifford turned to the young Rutland he thought him dead, so much had fear overcome him. The lad opened his eyes at the touch of the knight's mailed hand and spoke his dread in broken words. "Sweet Clifford," he said, "hear me speak before I die. I am too mean a subject for thy wrath; be thou revenged on men, and let me live."

But it was in vain he asked for mercy, for the grim lord could not forget his father's death, and

he said the lives of all York's sons were not sufficient to satiate his hatred, for the sight of any of that house was as a fury to torment his soul; and he vowed he should live in hell until he rooted out the accursed line and left not a single one alive. Then he lifted his hand, with a gleaming dagger in it, high above the boy's head, and would have slain him, but Rutland pleaded that he might pray before he took his death; and he prayed to the cruel lord himself. "Sweet Clifford, to thee I pray; pity me!" Clifford was unmoved, and said he should have such pity as his rapier point afforded. "I never did thee harm; why wilt thou slay me?" asked the boy. "Thy father hath," quoth the grim warrior. "But 'twas ere I was born," said Rutland; and then he appealed to Clifford in the name of his own son, for whose sake he begged pity; and finally said that when he gave occasion for offence, then let him die, for now there was no cause for killing him. "No cause?" muttered Clifford, "thy father slew my father; therefore die!" and he stabbed the innocent boy to death, glorying in his deed and uttering a warning to Plantagenet, as he called the Duke of York, to beware, for that his son's blood should rust upon his weapon till York's blood, congealed with it, should make him wipe both off.

While this cruel work was being done upon the plain, the army of the queen advanced towards the castle, and was met by the forces of York,

who, in spite of his weakness, had sallied forth to meet his powerful foe. Outnumbered as he was, it did not take long for the queen's army to vanquish his followers, and both of his uncles were speedily killed, while he himself, the hero of numberless battles and combats, was made faint and weak by his superhuman exertions. He could not fly with his own fleeing hosts, so exhausted was he; and he stood at bay awaiting the enemy, whose trumpets he heard approaching.

Presently the queen, with the Lords Clifford and Northumberland, discovered where he lay, and the latter, rejoiced at taking such a captive, bid him yield to their mercy, while Clifford threatened him with instant death. York defied them, impotent as he was, and Lord Clifford, impatient to despatch him, drew his sword; but the queen held his hand, and bid the two lords to lift the duke to his feet and carry him away a prisoner. They then asked what her grace would have done unto him; and the unpitying queen bid them stand him on a hillock; which being done, she railed and mocked at the humbled duke with a vicious spite, showing him at last a handkerchief stained with Rutland's blood, and offering it to quench the tears which might flow at thought of his dear son's death. She prayed him to grieve to make her merry, and in all respects showed an unwomanly joy at the poor duke's downfall, till at last because he was silent under the taunts, she cried, "York cannot speak unless he wears a

crown;" and she called for a crown of paper, which she set upon his head, saying he now looked like a king indeed.

The duke then burst forth in manly indignation against this she-wolf of France, and he said women are soft, mild, pitiful, and flexible, but she was stern, obdurate, flinty, rough, remorseless, and ten times more inhuman than tigers of Hyrcania. "See, ruthless queen," he cried, "you dipped this cloth in the blood of my sweet boy, and I wash the blood away with tears;" then he handed back the napkin and bid her go boast of this; for, said he, if she told the heavy story right, the hearers would shed tears, yea, even his foes would weep, and say it was a piteous deed. He turned then to Clifford, and prayed him to take him from the world, for he saw that his time was come, and he was weary of living.

The Duke of Northumberland was moved by York's plight and his pathetic words, and said that had he been slaughterman to all his kin he could not, for his life, but weep for him; but the hard-hearted queen chid him for his weakness, and Clifford, fearing delay might cheat him of his victim, cried, "Here's for my oath, here's for my father's death!" and he stabbed the duke to death. Then the queen, revengeful beyond her sex, stepped close to the fallen lord and also thrust her dagger in his side, saying as she did so, "And here's to right our gentle-hearted king."

Such was the end of the ambitious Plantagenet,

and the queen bid her soldiers hew off his head and set it on York gates, so that its duke might overlook his town.

In the mean time, Edward and Richard, the sons of the duke, had retreated with their soldiers to Mortimer's Cross, and there awaited news from their father. At last a messenger reached them whose heavy looks boded no good, and he forthwith told the brothers of their father's death. They were stricken sorely with grief, for their prop was gone, he who was the flower of Europe for his chivalry, and they knew not where to turn in the extremity of their woe for direction and succour.

But presently the Earl of Warwick marched up to join them, and to him they poured out their sorrow. He had already heard the dread tidings, and was as deep in grief as themselves. He said he had come to tell them what had since befallen, which was, that, after the battle, word was instantly brought him of the duke's defeat; and he, being then in London as keeper of the king, mustered his soldiers, gathered flocks of friends, and, as he thought, very well appointed, marched towards St. Albans to intercept the queen, bearing the king along in his behalf. He met the queen at St. Albans and joined battle with her, both sides fiercely fighting; but whether it was the coldness of the king that robbed his soldiers of courage, or fear of Clifford, who thundered "Blood and death!" he could not judge; but, he acknowledged, with shame mantling his swarthy cheeks, that he had

been defeated, and said that the king, being thus released, had fled to the queen, while he, with Lord George, their brother, and Norfolk, had come post-haste to join with them.

Edward, now the Duke of York, asked where was the Duke of Norfolk, and when George had come from Burgundy to England? Warwick told him that the duke was some six miles off with his soldiers, and that George, his brother, had lately been sent from his kind aunt of Burgundy with aid of soldiers for the present war.

Richard, who was of a misshapen stature and of a mind alike crooked in its courses, would not let the valiant Warwick off without some hinted reproaches at his defeat. He said he had often heard his praises in pursuit, but never till now his scandal of retreat. "Nor now my scandal," said the bold earl; "for you shall know this strong right hand of mine can pluck the diadem from faint Henry's head, were he as famous in war as he is famed for mildness, peace, and prayer." Richard said he knew it well; but it was the love he bore Lord Warwick's glories that made him speak. Then he asked what was to be done. Warwick said it was to determine this he had come to seek them out; and he therefore unfolded to them his plans. The proud, insulting queen, with Clifford and haughty Northumberland, had, he said, wrought the easy-melting king like wax. He had sworn consent to York's succession, and his oath was enrolled in the parliament; but now all the crew were gone to Lon-

don to frustrate both this oath and what beside might make against the house of Lancaster. He said, moreover, that their power was thirty thousand strong; but if the help of himself and Norfolk, with all the friends whom Edward could command amongst the loving Welsh, would amount to five-and-twenty thousand, why, via! to London; for once again they might bestride their foaming steeds and once again cry, Charge! but never again turn back and fly. "Now methinks I hear great Warwick speak," said Richard; and Edward said he would lean on the earl's shoulder, and when he failed Edward must fall, which heaven forefend! Warwick then promised this young Earl of March who had suddenly become the Duke of York, that the next degree should be England's royal throne, for he should be proclaimed king of England in every borough as they passed along.

But as these hopeful warriors were about to set forth, a messenger entered in hot haste with news from the Duke of Norfolk. He said that the queen was coming with a puissant host, and that the duke craved their company for speedy counsel. This quite assorted with their setting forth, and they went at once to the duke's camp.

Here they all resolved to march forward to meet the enemy, and presently they overtook the king and queen with their forces under the walls of York. Edward greeted the king with a bold demand that he should kneel for grace and set the crown upon his head, or abide the fortunes of the

field; and the queen, not trusting her faint-hearted consort to make reply, bid the duke go rate his minions, not his king. "I am his king," said Edward, proudly, "and he should bow his knee. I was adopted heir by his consent, since when his oath is broken, for he has by new act of parliament blotted out my name and put his own son's in." Hereupon insulting and bitter words passed between Richard and Clifford; and Warwick boldly put the question to Henry whether he would or would not yield the crown. The queen, hearing Warwick's voice, scornfully laughed at him for his flight at St. Albans; but he said that then it was his turn to fly, and now it was hers. Richard grew impatient of this idle raillery and called for the fight, and King Henry, hoping to the last to stop the bloodshed among his beloved subjects, begged the contending nobles to hear him speak. "Defy them, or else hold close thy lips," commanded the queen, whereat the king was warmed to assert his privilege; but Clifford said the wound that bred the meeting could not be cured by words, and bid the king be still. Thus exchanging reproaches and evil names, the lords wrangled on until Edward, weary of the bloodless fray, defied the queen and her nobles; and, since they denied the gentle king the chance to speak, commanded his trumpets to sound the charge. Then the queen, alarmed at last, cried, "Stay, Edward!" but he would not heed her, and went forth to lead his army to the fight.

With varying success the day sped on, now the

Yorkists, now the Lancastrians, seeming to have the advantage; but at last, when all appeared to be lost to the house of York, with one superhuman effort, overcoming physical as well as mental distress, the noble Warwick cheered the despairing brothers, rallied their flying forces, and carried the battle on to victory.

The king and queen, with Exeter and other lords, took horse and posted towards Berwick; but Clifford was sore wounded and lay bleeding upon the field. In the midst of his murmured woes he fainted and lay like death, so that when Edward and Richard, with their brother George, and Montague and Warwick, came near the spot where he lay, they did not distinguish him among the numberless slain.

But as they spoke joyfully together of the victory, Edward the while ordering some troops to pursue the bloody-minded queen, they wondered if Clifford had escaped with her, when a deep groan was heard near them, and looking down, they saw that cruel lord expiring at their feet.

With quick thought of revenge the Earl of Warwick suggested that the head of the Duke of York should be fetched down from the gates of York and Clifford's placed there instead. Edward then commanded that he should be brought forth from among the heap of slain, and vowed that death should stop his ill-boding tongue forever. They commanded the wounded lord to speak; but his head hung in listless silence. Richard, with mali-

cious spite, said it was but counterfeiting, for such was Clifford's policy; and each of the conquering knights in turn put mocking questions to their mighty enemy. When, at last, they were quite sure he was dead, they cut off his head, and it was reared in the place where York's had stood, over the city gates.

The next step was to London; there to triumph and crown Edward king of England; and the young duke, so soon to be sovereign, graciously thanked the valiant Warwick for his loyal service, and said never would he undertake anything wherein his counsel and consent was wanting. He said he would, when he took the throne, create his brother Richard, Duke of Gloster, and George, Duke of Clarence, but Warwick, as the king's self, should do and undo as he pleased.

When all this was finally done and Edward the Fourth had ascended to Henry's throne, the Earl of Warwick hastened across the sea to France to ask the Lady Bona to be Edward's queen, for by this alliance it was thought the two lands could be sinewed together; and, said Warwick, having France for his friend, Edward need not dread the scattered foe in England, which now hoped to rise again.

But the great earl had not long been gone when King Edward's susceptible heart was touched by the beauty of a lady among his own subjects, who came to sue for restoration of her lands which had been seized by King Henry after the battle of St.

Albans, where her husband had been slain. The name of this widow was Lady Grey; and, by the advice of Richard and in obedience to his own inclinations, the king determined to give back her lands; but he laid a condition on their return which the lady was loath to grant, for he asked her for her love; but she said she had rather lie in prison, for her honesty was her only dower, and even for her lands she would not lose it.

Edward was, in truth, the bluntest wooer in Christendom, and, finding he could not unlawfully prevail with the widow, he was so much enamoured with her looks, her wit, and her abundant perfections, that he proposed to her to be his queen. "'Tis better said than done, my gracious lord," quoth the dame, who did not believe him to be in earnest; but the king would not be denied. "Sweet widow," said he, "I swear by my state, I speak no more than what my soul intends, and that is to possess thee for my love." The Lady Grey was still doubtful of his good faith, but so warmly did he vow that he meant to make her his queen, she at last came to believe him and gladly yielded to his suit. Turning then to his brothers, who stood aside in whispered merriment, the king asked them if they would think it strange if he should marry her. "To whom?" asked Clarence, in jest. "Why, to myself," said Edward. "That would be a ten days' wonder," quoth Gloster; and so they laughed on, supposing that the king made merry, when a nobleman suddenly entered and

announced that King Henry had been taken and brought a prisoner to the palace gates. Edward bid him see that Henry was conveyed to the Tower, and he called his brothers, saying they should go with him to question the man that captured him. "Widow," he said to Lady Grey, "go you along;" and he commanded all his lords to use her honourably and according to the rank she was shortly to assume.

In the mean time the English Queen Margaret, having parted from King Henry in Scotland, had travelled post-haste to the French court, and, coming before King Lewis, poured forth the wrongs she had suffered at the hands of the house of York and the Earl of Warwick, and implored assistance to assert her right to the English crown. Lewis bid her sit down beside him on his throne, for, being his own countrywoman, he sympathized much with her, and was not slow to offer her the aid she asked. With some hesitation Queen Margaret at last took the offered seat, and said that the king's gracious words revived her drooping thoughts; but at this same instant the Earl of Warwick came into the king's presence and cut short the interview.

"Welcome, brave Warwick!" said the king. "What brings thee to France?" and he got down from his throne to greet the bold warrior, while Queen Margaret arose in dismay. The earl said that he came from Edward, King of Albion, his lord and sovereign, and the vowed friend of King

Lewis, first to do greeting to the king's royal person, then to crave a league of amity, and lastly to confirm that amity with a nuptial knot, if Lewis would vouchsafe to grant the virtuous Lady Bona, his fair sister, to King Edward in lawful marriage. Upon hearing this, Queen Margaret murmured that Henry's hope was done; but Warwick took no heed of her, thinking only of his weighty purpose with the king. He kissed the Lady Bona's hand in King Edward's behalf, and told her in appealing words the passion of his sovereign's heart, wherein fame had placed her beauty's image and her virtue. Then the English queen, unable longer to keep silence, broke out into abuse of King Edward and of Warwick, and bid King Lewis to look well that by this league and marriage he drew not upon himself danger and dishonour. Warwick repelled her accusations, but Lord Oxford, the queen's adherent, came to her rescue so hotly, that at last King Lewis was compelled to ask them to stand aside while he used further conference with Warwick.

When they were gone the king desired to know from the earl, even upon his conscience, if Edward were his true king; for he said he was loath to link with him that was not lawfully chosen. Warwick pawned his credit and honour on this point, and said also that Edward was gracious in the people's eye. Then the French king asked, "All dissembling set aside, tell me for truth the measure of his love unto our sister Bona?" The

earl said he had himself often heard the king swear that his love was an eternal plant, the root whereof was fixed in virtue's ground. Whereupon King Lewis turned to his sister and asked to hear her wishes. She said his grant or denial should be hers; but yet she confessed that when she had heard King Edward's deserts recounted, she had been tempted to desire for his love. "Then, Warwick," said King Lewis, "our sister shall be Edward's." And he commanded that the articles of the marriage should at once be drawn. "Come near, Queen Margaret," he said, "and be a witness that Bona shall be wife to the English king." "To Edward, but not to the English king," said Margaret, defiantly; yet her anger availed her little, for Lewis was obdurate, and said that she should have all kindness at his hands, but that as Edward appeared to be rightful king of England, it was but reason that he should be released from giving her aid against him.

But now a horn sounded without, which cut short the colloquy, and a messenger came posting in with letters from England for King Lewis, Queen Margaret, and the Earl of Warwick.

"Warwick, what news? and yours, fair queen?" asked King Lewis. The queen said hers filled her heart with unhoped-for joy; but Warwick, with a deep frown, said his was full of sorrow and discontent. "What!" stormed the angry Lewis, "has your king married the Lady Grey? and now, to excuse your forgery and his, sends me a paper to

persuade me patience? Is this the alliance he seeks with France? Dare he presume to scorn us in this manner?" The queen was rejoiced at this new turn of affairs, and she mockingly said it proved Edward's love and Warwick's honesty. Then Warwick, driven to self-defence, protested by the hope he had of heavenly bliss that he was clear from this misdeed of Edward's, who, he said, was no more his king, for he had dishonoured him; and he then and there renounced him and returned to Henry. To the queen he made overtures of peace, and begged her to let former grudges pass, for henceforth he would be her true servitor, and he pledged himself to revenge the wrong done to Lady Bona and to replant Henry in his former state.

Thus these bitter foes were reconciled, and Lewis quickly granted Warwick's request for a few bands of chosen soldiers, with which to land on the English coast and force the tyrant Edward from his seat by war. Then the French king sent back to the English king a martial message, saying he was sending over maskers to revel it with him and his new bride, and Warwick bid the messenger say that King Edward had done him wrong and therefore he would uncrown him.

But when Lewis had promised the Lords Warwick and Oxford five thousand men, with further supplies to follow with Queen Margaret and the young prince, her son, he asked the earl what pledge he could give of his loyalty to the English queen and her French allies. Warwick said that,

if the queen and her son agreed, he would join his eldest daughter to the young prince in holy wedlock. The queen agreed instantly, for the earl's daughter was fair and virtuous and the union would be of great service to the prince's cause. King Henry's young heir, therefore, gave Warwick his hand in pledge of his vow to wed the earl's daughter; and this being arranged, the English nobles set out forthwith to levy soldiers and prepare for the invasion of Edward's realm.

While King Edward was enjoying the early days of his marriage with Lady Grey in London, he one day stood with his brothers and courtiers in converse upon his wedding, for the king's brothers were much averse to it, when the messenger he had sent to France returned with the answers of King Lewis and Warwick. These much incensed the bold Edward, and he threatened wars to make them pay for their presumption; but when the messenger told of Warwick's alliance with the queen, by a marriage of his daughter to the young prince, the Duke of Clarence, Edward's brother, thought within himself that now was the time to gain credit with the powerful earl by demanding the hand of his other daughter; and he slipped away to put his plan into execution, taking with him the Duke of Somerset. The king seeing them go, and suspecting their motive, sent the Lords Pembroke and Stafford in all haste to levy men and prepare for the coming war, saying that himself in person would straightway follow them;

but before he went, Hastings and Montague, and his brother Richard, vowed that they would be true to his cause, upon which he said he was sure of victory.

In due time the Earl of Warwick's second daughter was wedded to the Duke of Clarence, and thus was cemented a union which gave great hope to King Henry's adherents; and so much was the earl encouraged by this and by the numbers of the common people who swarmed to his standard, that he conceived the bold plan of capturing King Edward in his own tent in the midst of his camp. Warwick knew that Edward's guard was small and the soldiers careless, and he thought he might surprise the king in the night and, seizing his person, put an end at once to the war and to the reign of the house of York.

The earl and his followers therefore set forth upon this enterprise, and succeeded past their hopes. Edward was taken without bloodshed, and Warwick uncrowned him and bid Lord Somerset convey him prisoner to his brother, Archbishop of York, for he said he had yet to fight with King Edward's forces before he could follow. This done he meant to set out for London, free King Henry from the Tower, and see him seated on the throne.

The imprisonment which Edward suffered at the hands of the Archbishop of York was by no means strict, for he was allowed to hunt through the country quite at large, saving for the presence of a single huntsman; and hearing of this, his brother

Richard, Lord Hastings, and Sir William Stanley betook them to that country, and lay in ambush to rescue the royal prisoner. This was a very easy matter and soon accomplished, and Edward, taking the huntsman with him, rode away to Lynn, and shipped with his friends for Flanders.

As Warwick and his generals greeted King Henry in the Tower and were about to set him at liberty, the news of Edward's escape was brought in to them, and they liked it not, for they surmised that the Duke of Burgundy would yield him help, and that they should before long have more battles to fight.

This proved quite true, for Edward quickly gathered strength in the duke's domain, and sailed back in a brief space to claim his dukedom of York. The mayor of York, however, would not let him enter the gates, for now, he said, he owed allegiance unto Henry; but Edward argued that if Henry were his king, he was at least his duke, and the mayor upon this opened the gates and admitted the lawful ruler of the town, whereupon it was not long before Edward, at the urgent prayer of his nobles, allowed himself again to be proclaimed king.

This news stirred Warwick and his followers to renewed action, and presently they also took the field with a reinforced army; but King Henry rested in London.

When his warriors had left his presence, the king stayed in talk with his loyal servant Exeter upon the fortunes of the war. He was confident

of victory, he said, because he had not stopped his ears against the demands of his subjects, but in all things had treated them with mildness and pity; hence Edward would not be able to seduce them from their allegiance. Thus it was that this weak king mistook a yielding will for mercy, and having lost his royal prerogatives by indecision, thought to hold his people's affection by that same trait. But as he talked in this vein, there suddenly arose a shout from his people out of doors, "A Lancaster! a Lancaster!" and in an instant a score of knights in armor rushed into the room and took him captive.

These were King Edward and his brother Gloster with their nobles and soldiers, and they bore the astonished king away to the Tower even before he could offer a remonstrance or draw his sword. Then the conquering band took its course towards Coventry, there to meet Warwick and join in a final battle for Edward's cause.

When at last they arrived, they found the earl intrenched within the town of Coventry, and though all his forces had not yet come up, he was little intimidated by King Edward's threats, but calmly awaited his fellow-generals and their troops. Presently Lord Oxford arrived with beating drums and flying colors and passed through the gates, and after him marched Montague with an equally large force. These were followed by Somerset; and then came Edward's brother Clarence with a fair following for Warwick's aid. "Come, Clarence, come," said the earl; "thou wilt if Warwick call;"

but he miscalculated his power over this changeful duke, for Clarence, seeing his brother's army close at hand, halted and hesitated under the walls. At last his purpose grew firm, and he took the red rose of Lancaster from his cap and cast it towards the earl. "Father of Warwick," he cried, "know you what this means? Look here, I throw my infamy at thee." Thus in one instant he undid what he had undertaken with so much plotting, to gain his selfish ends. Then he turned from Warwick to his brother Edward and asked his pardon; and he begged Richard not to frown upon his faults, for he would henceforth be no more unconstant. Edward welcomed him ten times more, he said, than if he had never deserved his hate, and Gloster gave him a brotherly greeting; but Warwick from the walls denounced him as a traitor perjured and unjust; upon hearing whose voice King Edward challenged the earl to leave the town and fight, or else he threatened to beat the stones about his ears. Warwick bid him to battle if he dared, and thus the crisis in the affairs of these two opposing houses of Lancaster and York drew on apace.

The battle took place near Barnet, and after much brave fighting on either side the victory fell to King Edward, who wounded the great Earl of Warwick and left him on the field to die, while he went again into the fight to find and conquer the Lord Montague. Warwick bewailed his fate alone, crying in his pain and bitterness, "Why, what is pomp, rule, reign, but earth and dust, for,

live how we can, we must all die at last." But as he uttered these hopeless words his friends Oxford and Somerset came up with the news that the queen had brought a puissant power from France. This revived the courage of the dying earl, and he called for his brother Montague to come and take his hand, and with his lips keep in his soul awhile; and because he did not come, Warwick reproached him with loving him not, for if he did, he said, his tears would wash away the congealed blood that glued his lips. But the sad truth was that Montague had breathed his last, crying out to the latest gasp for Warwick; and when they told the dying earl this, he said, "Sweet rest to his soul," and bidding farewell to his friends, he also gave up the ghost.

Queen Margaret with thirty thousand French soldiers, and reinforced by Oxford and Somerset, who now fled to her camp, held her course towards Tewksbury, and thither King Edward straightway followed her, where meeting her force in battle, he overcame the queen and made her, with Oxford and Somerset, his prisoners.

Lord Oxford he sent to Hammes castle, while Somerset was immediately beheaded, but the prince, whom Edward feared even more than these, because he was Henry's heir, had not been taken, and the king offered a high reward for his capture.

But fortune in all things smiled upon Edward, for as he uttered the words some soldiers came up with the prince in their custody, and, being invited

to speak, the boy boldly defied the king, bidding him resign his chair and kneel where now he stood. King Edward, in the pride of his victory, could ill brook such words from a wilful lad, and wishing above all things for his death, which would remove a dangerous rival to the throne, he drew his sword and stabbed him, upon which each of his brothers in turn did the same, until the prince lay dead at his mother's feet.

"O kill me too!" cried the queen; and Gloster would have surely stabbed her had not the king restrained him, saying they had already done too much. Then the lady swooned, and while they used means for her recovery, Gloster whispered Clarence, asking him to excuse him to the king, for he meant to go hence to London on a serious matter, and he added, "Ere ye come there, be sure to hear some news." Clarence questioned what; to which Gloster made no reply saving, "The Tower! The Tower!" Presently the king asked where Richard had gone, and when he was told, he seemed to divine his brother's purpose, and made no motion to prevent it, but set about gathering his forces for the march to London.

When Richard arrived at the Tower he found King Henry seated with a book in his hand, and greeted him fairly; but the king was suspicious of his intention, the more especially as Gloster ordered the lieutenant of the Tower to leave them to themselves, for they must, he said, confer. "So flies the reckless shepherd from the wolf,"

said the unfortunate king; but Richard replied that suspicion always haunted the guilty mind, and the thief fears each bush an officer. The king asked him wherefore he came, and if it were for his life. But Gloster said he was not an executioner; and thus they talked on, each divining the hidden thoughts of the other, until the misshapen Gloster pretended to be incensed at the king's description of his unnatural birth; and, crying he would hear no more, he stabbed him to death. But not satisfied with this, he lifted his dripping sword, which he said was weeping for the poor king's death, and in very wantonness stabbed him again, crying, "Down, down to hell: and say I sent thee thither!" After which, remembering the king's description of his birth, he murmured out a kind of grim satisfaction, that being the hunchback he was, he had, in revenge upon nature that made him so, neither pity, love, nor fear; and he reflected that it was true, as Henry had said, that he came into the world with his legs forward, and was born with teeth. In this moment of self-revelation he also growled forth a warning to his brothers, bidding Clarence beware, for he would find means to remove him; and against Edward he would, he said, buzz prophesies abroad which should make him fearful for his life, and then, to purge his fear, he would be his death.

The king, quite unconscious of Gloster's grim thoughts, came to London with all despatch, and ascended the throne amid his nobles, to whom he

spoke with royal pride of the trials passed through and the victories won. He bid his good Queen Bess come to his side, and he kissed his boy, young Ned, as he called him, telling him how his father and his uncles had in their armors watched the winter's night, and gone all afoot in summer's scalding heat, that the little prince might repossess the crown in peace. Gloster stood by watching this scene furtively, and in his heart planning to blast the prince's harvest, and when the king bid him to love his lovely queen and kiss his princely nephew, he put his grim lips against those of the child, muttering, "So Judas kissed his Master." But witnessing this scene of amity, Edward felt that he was seated as his soul delighted to be, for he had his country's peace and brothers' loves; so that, when Clarence asked what his majesty would do with Queen Margaret, for whom her father, Reignier, had pawned the Sicilies and Jerusalem to France, and had sent the sum thus raised to England for her ransom, the king bid him away with her, and waft her to France.

Thus the house of Lancaster being disposed of, the victorious king of the house of York spent the time with stately triumphs and mirthful comic shows, such as befitted the pleasure of the court.

KING RICHARD III.

RICHARD, Duke of Gloster, was the third son to Richard Plantagenet, Duke of York, who, having won King Henry the Sixth to make him his heir to the crown, was afterwards slain in battle by Lord Clifford. But upon the murder of King Henry the Sixth by this same Richard, Edward, his brother, ascended the throne in his father's stead.

There were between the Duke of Gloster and the crown some five different heirs, for this King Edward the Fourth had a son Edward, who was Prince of Wales; and the Duke of Clarence, the second son of the Duke of York and the king's brother, had a son and a daughter; but the dark and unscrupulous mind of Richard, who, malformed in shape and hideous in face, found little to delight him in the diversions of the court, determined him to become a villain; and to achieve his purpose of gaining the crown he deliberately laid plots to entangle his brothers in enmities, freely telling lies and consorting with fortune-tellers, whom he employed to work upon the superstitious mind of the sick king, his brother.

The first victim which this wicked prince sacrificed to his ambition to be king was his loving brother the Duke of Clarence, for whom he professed the tenderest attachment, pretending to return his love with a twofold fervor. But while he was acting thus to Clarence, he was poisoning the mind of the king against him by the use of a device common to malicious men of those days, which was to make an enemy the victim of some old prophecy, such as, in this case, that the murderer of Edward's heirs should be "G.," as indeed he was, for Gloster did finally secure their death; but now this wicked duke made the king believe that the prophecy was pointed at George, Duke of Clarence, and the king, whose own evil deeds had made him suspicious of others, was ready to believe the tale, and, hence, he had his brother Clarence conveyed to the Tower, where he was slain by the king's secret commands. But it was Gloster who planned the murder and procured the ruffians who did the deed.

As Sir Robert Brakenbury, the lieutenant of the Tower, came into Clarence's room one morning, he found the poor duke looking alarmed and ill, and upon asking what was the cause, Clarence told him of a fearful dream he had had that same night. "Methought," said he, his eyes still wandering in affright, "that I had broken from the Tower and was embarked to cross to Burgundy, and in my company was my brother Gloster, who tempted me to walk from my cabin upon the

hatches. There we looked towards England, and recalled the heavy times that had befallen us during the wars of York and Lancaster. As we paced along upon the giddy footing methought Gloster stumbled, and, in falling, struck me, who meant to save him, overboard. Then I thought what pain it was to drown, what dreadful noise of water was in my ears, and what sights of ugly death in my eyes. Methought I saw scattered in the bottom of the sea a thousand fearful wrecks, a thousand men gnawed upon by fishes, wedges of gold, great anchors, heaps of pearl, inestimable stones, and jewels beyond value. Some lay in dead men's skulls; and in those holes which eyes did once inhabit there were crept, as if in scorn of eyes, reflecting gems, that wooed the slimy bottom of the deep, and mocked the dead bones that lay scattered by."

The good lieutenant tried to compose the troubled mind of the duke, but the fearful dream had taken hold of his senses so deeply that he would not be comforted; and, in truth, there was good reason for his alarm, though he knew it not, for Richard had sent his murderers that very day to do their bloody work, and they were even then, as he spoke, entering the Tower.

When the duke at last retired to try and take some sleep, the two men presented themselves to Brakenbury and, showing him the king's warrant, demanded to be admitted to Clarence's chamber. As the lieutenant was powerless to oppose the royal

commission, he pointed out where the duke lay asleep, and gave the two men the keys, saying he would away to the king and signify that he had resigned his charge to them.

Thus admitted to Clarence's bedside, the murderers looked upon him sleeping, and one of them was for a moment seized with a fit of remorse, which the raillery and coaxing of the other soon overcame, and so they counselled how best to strike their victim. "Take him on the head with the hilt of your sword, and then throw him into the Malmsey-wine butt in the next room," said the boldest villain; but just as his accomplice was about to do this the duke awoke, saying, "Where art thou, keeper? give me a cup of wine." "You shall have wine enough, my lord, anon," was the grim reply; and Clarence, beginning to understand their meaning, cried, "In God's name, what art thou?" He saw the deadly eyes menace him, and the pale cheeks bending above him, and he asked why they had come; to which one replied in stammering words that they were come to murder him. Then Clarence put forth all the moving language and thoughts that come to a doomed man. He pleaded and argued with them for his life, until, had they been susceptible of pity, their hearts must have melted at his words. But hope of reward and dread of Richard's anger turned them into stone, and in order to end the scene, which was painful even to them, one of the murderers told the duke to look behind him, which when he did, the other

instantly stabbed him, crying, "Take that, and that!"

When the poor duke was near to death, this desperate ruffian picked up his body and bore it into the next room, there to quench his life in the butt of Malmsey wine. But the other murderer, whose conscience was not yet all extinguished, was appalled at the deed and wished he might wash his hands of it. His fellow questioned anon why he helped him not; but rather than meddle any further in the grievous business this remorseful villain told the other to take Richard's fee all to himself, for he repented the duke was slain, thus showing how conscience sooner or later asserts itself and punishes us with regret that deepens into lifelong despair.

Now, the king's courtiers and the relations of Elizabeth, his queen, had long been at enmity, and this had much vexed his majesty, who, being ill and fearing that he might die, was anxious to compose their differences and make peace in his household.

With this purpose in mind he called all the opposing lords together and bid each embrace the other, which, with much outward show of amity, they did. But among those who were most accused of keeping the discord alive was Richard of Gloster, and the king noticed that he was not present. Gloster, however, was well aware of the king's desire and of all which had taken place, and just as the king missed him he came gravely up, bidding

the group an amiable good-morning. When the king told him what had been done he called the hour blessed, and said that if among them all any, by false intelligence or wrong surmise, held him for a foe, he desired to reconcile himself to his friendly peace, for he hated enmity and desired all good men's love. Then this dissembling duke entreated peace of the queen, of Buckingham, of Lord Rivers, the queen's brother, and of Dorset, her son, and of the Lords Woodville and Scales, all of whom were his sworn foes.

The queen was so much rejoiced at this show of love that she said the day should be kept holy thereafter, and she wished that all strifes might be so compounded, beseeching the king in her fervour to take his brother Clarence back to grace.

But Gloster hereupon showed signs of affront, and asked her if he had offered his love only to be flouted thus in the royal presence; for he questioned who knew not that Clarence was dead, and he charged that she did the gentle duke injury thus to scorn his corse. This was Gloster's sly way of making known this hateful crime, and it had its effect, for all who were within hearing started and lost color at the news, and the king asked if it were really true, for he said the order had been reversed. Gloster replied that Clarence was executed before the second order arrived, for the first was borne by a winged Mercury, but the last by some tardy cripple.

The king was stricken with remorse at this news.

He had thought to undo his wrong to Clarence, and never have it known that he intended his death; but an evil purpose such as his works out its own revenge, and now King Edward could do nothing but mourn his brother's death and blame himself for the crime. "O God!" he cried, "I fear thy justice will take hold on me and mine for this," and then, under the escort of Lord Hastings, he withdrew, with all his lords save Buckingham, in grief to his closet.

Gloster being thus left alone with Buckingham, who was his sole ally in the court, and several lesser lords, he bid them mark how all the guilty kindred of the queen looked pale when they heard of Clarence's death, and he insinuated that the queen's family were guilty of the duke's death, but he said, in his seeming righteous wrath, that God would revenge the deed, and he bid them all go in and comfort the king in company.

But it was not long before King Edward himself died, and his son, the young Prince of Wales, who was then at Ludlow, inherited the throne as King Edward the Fifth. The Duke of Buckingham proposed that the young king should forthwith be fetched from Ludlow, with some little train, to be crowned in London; but Earl Rivers, the queen's brother, who feared the ambitious designs of Buckingham and Gloster, was opposed to this, and asked why there should be a little train. The duke replied that if there were a multitude the new-healed wounds of malice might break out afresh, and

Gloster too thought thus, whereupon Rivers assented; but the struggle was not yet over, for the choice of an escort must be determined, and this was a harder task still. Buckingham and Gloster, however, determined that whoever might journey to the prince, themselves must be of the party, for on the way they would find occasion to part the queen's proud kindred from his highness and take him under their own plotting guidance.

This they finally did by boldly sending Lord Rivers, Lord Grey, and Sir Thomas Vaughan, prisoners to Pomfret Castle, and when the news was brought to Queen Elizabeth, she saw in it, she said, the ruin of her house, for the tiger had now seized the gentle hind, her son, and in this she read, as in a map, the end of all. She then fled with her younger son, the Duke of York, to sanctuary, whence under the laws of those days none could forcibly take her or him.

When the young king, accompanied by Gloster and Buckingham, with Cardinal Bouchier and other followers, arrived in London, he asked anxiously for his mother and brother, whom he had expected to come forth to meet him; but presently Lord Hastings arrived in their stead, telling the news of their flight to sanctuary, whereupon Buckingham bid the cardinal go thither and persuade the queen to send the young Duke of York to the king, and if she denied the request, he ordered that Hastings should, even in violation of the laws of sanctuary, pluck the boy from her arms perforce. The cardi-

nal opposed this and refused to infringe the holy privilege; but Buckingham accused him of being obstinate, and with a specious argument broke down the prelate's objections, so that he went speedily forth to the queen.

Then the young king asked his uncle Gloster where he and his brother should sojourn till his coronation, and the duke feigned to let Edward choose for himself; but his counsel, which the prince dared not disobey, was that his highness should repose at the Tower, for there Gloster knew he might the easier keep him within his grasp. The king said he did not like the Tower, and shuddered at the thought of entering, even for a little time, that grim prison where his uncle Clarence had so lately been murdered; but as he and his uncle Richard spoke together of this, the young Duke of York was brought to them by Lord Hastings and Cardinal Bouchier, and the joyful meeting turned the king's mind from the bitter subject. But Gloster was determined to entrap his nephews in the Tower, where he might the more readily accomplish his designs upon them, and without appearing to do so, he led them by gradual steps to consent to go thither, while he and Buckingham, his confederate in all this, went to the queen to entreat her also to meet and welcome her sons at the Tower.

When Gloster and Buckingham were alone, the latter called to his side Sir William Catesby, a trusted attendant upon this pair of plotters, and

sounded him as to Lord Hastings' loyalty to Richard should he aim to ascend the throne. Catesby said that Hastings loved Prince Edward for his father's sake, and would not easily be won from him; and Stanley, he said, would do whatever Hastings did. Buckingham then bid Catesby go and sound Hastings, and summon him to a conference upon the coronation, at the Tower on the morrow; and Gloster seconded this, by sending word that Hastings' ancient knot of dangerous adversaries should die on that same day at Pomfret castle.

When their messenger was gone, Richard, in his well-dissembled gratitude, told Buckingham to claim of him, when he should be king, the earldom of Hereford and all the movables his brother the late king was possessed of, for he assured him that these things should be yielded with all kindness. Then these two notable conspirators went to sup together, so that being together afterwards they might digest their plots into some form.

Catesby did his task with all expedition, and on the morrow Hastings and Stanley were both of the council in the Tower which met to determine the coronation of the young king; but they had both refused to give assent to Richard's claim to the throne, and this news Catesby had carried to his master. The Bishop of Ely and other lords, with the Duke of Buckingham, were also of the company in the Tower; but Richard was not present when the conference opened, and the

unwary Hastings, upon Buckingham's prompting, ventured to give his voice in Gloster's behalf, so much he said the duke loved and confided in him.

Just at this moment Gloster appeared with suave apologies for his delay, upon which Buckingham told him that had he not come Lord Hastings would have pronounced his voice in the council. To this Richard returned that no man might be bolder, for his lordship knew and loved him well; but instantly he drew Buckingham aside and told him of Catesby's tidings, saying that Hastings was so hot he would lose his head ere he would give consent that Edward should lose the royalty of England. Then these two withdrew, and the rest went on with the business in hand; but the unsuspecting Hastings could not help alluding to Richard's cheerful looks. Said he, "There must be some conceit afoot that he likes well, when he bids good-morrow with such spirit," and he added that there was not a man in Christendom who could hide his love or hate less than the Duke of Gloster, for by his face you could straightway know his heart. Thus do some men pass for wise who perceive not the most obvious concealments of others; but Stanley, more alert, asked what was to be perceived in his face that day; and Hastings said that it showed he was offended with no man there, for if he were he could not have kept it from view.

But at this same moment the Dukes of Gloster and Buckingham returned, and Richard, with a grave brow, asked what they deserved that con-

spired against his life with devilish pilots of witchcraft, and prevailed upon his body with charms. Hastings was foremost in answering that they who did these black deeds deserved death. "Then," said Richard, "be your eyes the witness of their evil," and he showed his arm, which from birth had been deformed, saying it was like a blasted sapling, and he accused Queen Elizabeth and Jane Shore, the mistress of Hastings, of thus marking him with their spells. Hastings began to speak, "If they have done this deed——" but Richard cut him short: "If! talk thou to me of ifs?" and he accused him of harbouring Jane Shore, for which offence he said he was a traitor. He therefore commanded the attendants to take off his head, and vowed he would not dine until he saw it done.

Hastings was instantly led out to execution, and another obstacle was thus removed from Richard's path to the throne.

The people of England were, however, to be won over before the Duke of Gloster could safely assume the crown, and to accomplish this end he sent Buckingham to the mayor of London, bidding him infer to the mayor the bastardy of his brother, King Edward, and of his children, for he said that Edward was begotten when his father was in France, and by true computation of the time the old duke found that Edward was not his own child, which well appeared in his lineaments, he being in nothing like the noble duke, his father. But he craftily bid Buckingham to touch sparingly upon

this, because his mother lived, whose fame he was quite willing to assail, but he feared to be accused of unfilial conduct, which would be accounted a sin with the populace.

He arranged with Buckingham that if he throve well in his mission he should bring the mayor and citizens to Baynard's castle, where, said Richard, he would be found accompanied with learned bishops and reverend fathers.

Buckingham fared but ill in his appeal to the people; but he induced the mayor to go to Baynard's castle, and he counselled Richard not to be spoken with but by mighty suit and urging, and to come forth at last between two churchmen, with a prayer-book *in* his hands. When, therefore, the lord mayor with his aldermen and a following of citizens came at last into the court of the castle, Richard was not present, and Buckingham alone greeted them. He turned to Catesby and asked what reply Gloster had given to his request that he might see the duke, and Catesby, well schooled in such dissembling, said that the duke entreated his grace to visit him to-morrow or next day, for he was with two reverend fathers and would not be moved in worldly suits.

Buckingham bid Catesby return and tell the duke that the mayor and aldermen desired an audience; but this was futile, for Catesby came back with the reply that, being there with such troops of citizens, the duke feared they meant no good to him and would not show himself.

Again Catesby was sent in to tell Gloster they came in perfect love, and this was at last successful, for the duke appeared between two bishops in a gallery above them.

Richard cunningly said that he suspected he had done some offence to the city thus to bring forth so many of its people; and Buckingham, quickly taking up the suggestion, replied that he had done so, and prayed it might please him to amend his fault. "Else wherefore do I breathe in a Christian land?" humbly replied Richard; whereupon Buckingham told him that his fault was to have resigned the supreme seat and throne majestical, the lineal glory of his house, to the corruption of the blemished stock of Edward; for the duke protested in the name of the citizens that the noble isle, Richard's rightful kingdom, wanted her proper limbs, her true sovereign, whom to secure he heartily solicited the gracious duke to take on him the charge and kingly government of the land, not as protector, steward, or substitute, but by right of inheritance; and this, quoth the crafty confederate of Richard, was the will of the citizens, who had come thither to proclaim their loyalty.

Richard replied with becoming modesty that he knew not whether to depart from them in silence or bitterly to reprove them; but if he kept silent, he said, they might think he yielded to their request, and if he reproved them he might unduly check his friends. He therefore said that his deserts did not merit their high request, and with

many more carefully chosen words he bid them be true to his nephew Edward, who would well become the seat of majesty.

Buckingham then took up the strain of argument for the citizens, and repeated all the evidence against Prince Edward's legitimacy which Gloster had before invented and revealed to him. The urgent words and the seeming truth of Buckingham's plea impressed the mayor of London not a little, and presently he entreated Duke Richard to draw forth his noble ancestry from the corruption of abusing time. The mayor was seconded by Buckingham and Catesby, though no voice was yet raised among the citizens; but Richard, seeing the time was ripe, began to yield, with many reasons against yielding and much pretended backdrawing, till Buckingham clinched the argument by vowing that whether Richard consented or not his nephew should never reign, for he said the citizens of England, for whom he spoke, would plant some other on the throne, to the disgrace and downfall of the house of York. Then feigning to be weary of entreaty, he bid the people come away, and all followed him forth.

When they were gone Catesby, keeping up the conceit, begged Richard to call them back; and the wary duke, knowing that the critical moment had arrived, seemed to melt at Catesby's pleading, and allowed him to run after the retreating throng. Presently the trusty lieutenant returned with Buckingham and the rest, and Richard said, with much

show of reluctance, that since they would needs buckle fortune on his back and force him bear her burden whether he would or no, he would accept the charge, but the scandal or reproach, if there were any, must be upon their heads, for they had forced him, and he was guiltless. The mayor cried, "May God bless your grace!" and willingly assumed the blame; while Buckingham saluted the duke with the royal title, "Long live King Richard, England's worthy king!" to which the citizens uttered a feeble amen.

It was then arranged that Gloster should be crowned on the morrow, and he retired, as he said, to his holy work, bidding a solemn farewell to his cousin of Buckingham and to all his gentle friends.

Once crowned king, the wicked Duke of Gloster determined that every rival to the throne should be removed from his path. He insinuated to Buckingham that he would like him to procure the death of his nephew Edward, but Buckingham appeared not to heed his meaning and gave no willing answer. This enraged Richard, and he turned to his attendants for aid, one among whom told him of a discontented gentleman named Tyrrel, who would do the deed, and Richard instantly sent for him, saying the deep-revolving Buckingham should no more be the neighbor to his counsels. To Catesby he assigned another task, which was to noise abroad that his wife Anne was grievous sick and like to die, for he meant that she should

be put to death, so that, being free, he might marry his brother Edward's daughter, and thus confirm his title to the throne, for, he said, else it stood on brittle glass. His niece, the daughter of Clarence, he planned to marry to some mean, poor gentleman, and thus be rid of her; but the boy, her brother, he said was foolish and he feared him not.

Thus did this bloody duke plan the destruction of his family; and he set about executing his plans with a speed and skill which were like to win him success in spite of the falling away of Buckingham, so that when that lord came to him saying he had considered in his mind the king's late request that Prince Edward should be removed, Richard told him to let that rest. Then Buckingham laid claim to the earldom of Hereford which Richard had promised him when he came to the throne; but Richard put him off, feigning not to heed him, and again and again he did the same to Buckingham's importunities, until at last the king grew vexed and told the duke he troubled him, and that he was not in the vein. Then Richard passed out with his attendants, leaving Buckingham, his fellow in all the dark plots of his ambition, to brood upon the ingratitude which cast him off when these were fulfilled.

In the mean time Sir James Tyrrel had had the young princes put to death as Richard had commanded, and he described to the king afterwards how Dighton and Forrest, the two murderers he

had hired for the deed, albeit they were hardened villains, melted with tenderness and wept like children in telling the sad story of their death. The gentle babes, said they, lay girdling one another within their alabaster, innocent arms; their lips were four red roses on a stalk, and in their summer beauty kissed each other. A book of prayers lay on their pillow, which once, quoth Forrest, had almost changed his mind; but when, at this point in the story, Forrest touched by the remembrance stopped, Dighton took it up, and told on how they had smothered the most replenished, sweet work of nature that she had framed from the prime creation.

As all these crimes of the king's begetting became known one by one, Edward's queen and Richard's mother took alarm, and mingled their grief for the loss of their kin with the dread of like treatment for themselves, for none knew the sinister operations of Richard's mind, nor where next his enmity or policy might strike. Richard knew this, and felt that it was therefore the extreme of boldness for him to ask Queen Elizabeth, whose sons he had just murdered, for the hand of her daughter in marriage. The union was all the more distasteful to her because of his near relationship; but in the pursuit of his ambitious object the treacherous king knew no bounds, and with cunning flatteries and covert threats he plied the poor, frightened queen until at last she yielded.

But there was one claimant to the throne who

was not within King Richard's power. This was Henry, Earl of Richmond, who now approached the western coast of England with a puissant navy, awaiting only the aid of the Duke of Buckingham before invading the realm.

When Richard heard of this he took prompt measures to raise a force with which to oppose Richmond, saying to Stanley, who brought the news, that there was no heir to the house of York but himself, and that England's king must be the great York's heir. But the cunning duke knew that he had much to fear from such an invasion, and he could little trust the few friends who still clung to his cause. He rated Stanley roundly for his coldness and that he brought no force to his aid; and when he sent that nobleman away to the north to gather a power, he put so little faith in his fealty that he demanded his son as a hostage.

As Stanley left for the north, new reports of revolt came in from Devonshire and from Kent; but accompanying these was a more reassuring message, to the effect that Buckingham's army had been dispersed by sudden floods and that the duke himself had wandered away alone, no one knew whither. The king threw his purse to the bearer of this news, and asked if any well-advised friend had proclaimed reward to him who should bring the traitor in, for so at last Richard had come to call his late ally.

But another messenger speedily arrived with tidings of an uprising in Yorkshire, which, how-

ever, was offset with the welcome news that the fleet of Richmond had been dispersed by tempest and that Richmond had set sail for Bretagne.

This rejoiced King Richard, and he bid his forces march on, if not to fight with foreign enemies, still to surprise the rebels at home. But just as the king uttered these hopeful words Catesby, as if to overwhelm him with good news, came up with the tidings of Buckingham's capture; yet he must needs add the colder tidings that the Earl of Richmond had not sailed for Bretagne as was reported but had landed at Milford on the Welsh coast.

This changed the current of Richard's mood from exultation to warlike haste. "Away towards Salisbury," he commanded, and reproached his generals for reasoning there while a royal battle might be won and lost. Then, ordering that Buckingham should be brought after him to Salisbury, he took the command of his forces and marched onward.

In the mean time, hearing of Richmond's approach, his kinsman, Lord Stanley, sent him greetings and assurances that but for the danger to his son, who remained a hostage in King Richard's hands, he would have joined forces with him, as did many of his fellow-nobles; and he further informed Richmond that Queen Elizabeth, who had been compelled to pledge her daughter to Richard, now heartily consented to her espousal with Richmond.

When King Richard arrived at Salisbury his first act was the execution of Buckingham, whose death brought him relief from a dangerous foe, for this unscrupulous duke not only knew all the bloody secrets of the king, and would have revealed them, but he was enraged at Richard's rejection of his claims, and would have been a powerful ally to Richmond. After trying in vain to speak with the king, the duke asked to be led to the block of shame, where he himself had already sent so many, and there resting his head for the axe, he murmured, "Wrong hath but wrong, and blame the due of blame," and straightway died.

The opposing armies of King Richard and of the Earl of Richmond encamped over against each other at Bosworth field, and in the evening, while the king was holding counsel with his generals, the Duke of Norfolk and the Earl of Surrey, the Earl of Richmond received a secret visit from Lord Stanley, who gave him a glad greeting and assured him of assistance on the morrow. He advised this young earl to prepare his battle early in the morning and to put his fortunes to the arbitrament of bloody strokes, saying that he, as he might, would deceive the time with best advantage and aid him in the shock of arms. But he added that he could not on his side be too forward, lest, being seen, his son George, the earl's brother, might be executed in his father's sight. Then Stanley bid his noble son-in-law farewell, and crying, "Be valiant and speed well," he withdrew to his own

camp, which lay at some distance behind the king's.

Richmond was much affected by his father's visit, and when he was gone out into the night, the earl lifted his voice in prayer to Him whose captain he accounted himself, asking for aid in the morrow's conflict against the usurper. Then he lay down to rest, and dreamed peacefully of the happiness which he hoped was to be his. But King Richard, whose tent was not far away, went to bed without prayer and slept without rest.

For when these two rivals for England's throne had been long abed and slumbered each according to his deserts, there arose a vision of Prince Edward, son to Henry the Sixth, between their tents, which slowly turned towards where the king lay, saying gravely, "Let me sit heavy on thy soul to-morrow. Think how thou stabb'dst me in my prime of youth at Tewksbury. Despair, therefore, and die!" But toward Richmond the ghost turned with words of cheer, saying the wronged souls of butchered princes would fight in his behalf. Then there arose another vision like to King Henry the Sixth, which bid Richard think on the Tower and him, saying, "Harry the Sixth bids thee despair and die!" This ghost also turned to Richmond, calling him virtuous and holy and bidding him conquer. In its turn the ghost of Clarence arose with like words of reproach for the king and of hope for Richmond; then came the spirits of Rivers, Grey, and Vaughan, kinsmen

of Queen Elizabeth; of Hastings, of the two young princes, sons of King Edward; of Queen Anne, wife to Richard; and lastly, of the Duke of Buckingham, the first that helped Richard to the crown and the last to feel his tyranny. These appalling ghosts looked with sad reproaches upon the usurper, then suddenly vanished; upon which King Richard started out of his dream crying, "Give me another horse,—bind up my wounds,—have mercy, Jesu!" But in another instant his courage prevailed, and he muttered that he did but dream, saying at last aloud, "O coward conscience, how dost thou afflict me!"

Yet the lights burned blue about his tent, for it was now the dead of midnight, and presently cold, fearful drops stood on his trembling flesh, and his heart accused him with a thousand several tongues, every tongue bringing in a several tale, and every tale condemning him for a villain. Despair seized upon him in that awful moment. There was, he said, no creature who loved him, and if he died, no soul would pity him. "Methought the souls of all that I had murdered came to my tent, and every one did threat to-morrow's vengeance on the head of Richard." Thus he moaned to himself, while Ratcliff, who slept near at hand, came in, saying the early village cock had twice done salutation to the morning, and he told the king his friends were up and buckling on their armor. "O Ratcliff," said Richard, "I have dreamed a fearful dream!" and he asked if Ratcliff thought

all their friends would prove true. "Nay, my good lord, be not afraid of shadows," said the soldier. But the king was nevertheless sore afraid. He said, "By the apostle Paul, shadows to-night have struck more terror to the soul of Richard than can the substance of ten thousand soldiers, armed in proof and led by shallow Richmond." Then, true to his suspicious nature, he bid Ratcliff go with him to play the eavesdropper under his tents, to hear if any of his soldiers meant to shrink from him.

The waking of Richmond was as cheerful and full of promise as was Richard's grim and ominous. The several lords came into his tent and greeted him with a good-morrow, to arouse him from his lingering sleep. "'Cry mercy, lords," he said, cheerly, "that you have taken a tardy sluggard here." They asked him how he had slept, and he said he had had "the sweetest sleep and fairest-boding dreams that ever entered in a drowsy head. Methought their souls, whose bodies Richard murdered, came to my tent, and cried, 'On! victory!'" He promised his friends that his heart was very jocund, and asked how far into the morning it was. When they told him upon the stroke of four, he said it was time to arm, and he arose to give direction to his forces.

King Richard, on his side, also called up his men to arms, and bid one go to summon Lord Stanley to bring his power to the fight. The messenger returned anon, saying that Stanley denied

to come. "Off with his son George's head!" cried the enraged king; but before the command could be obeyed news came that the enemy had passed the marsh and were close upon them. This aroused in Richard all the prowess of his warlike family. "A thousand hearts are great within my bosom!" he cried, and ordered his standards to advance and the onset to begin.

But though King Richard that day enacted more wonders than a man, though he fought on foot when his horse was slain and sought for Richmond in the throat of death, yet his cause was lost; and at last, rushing in upon Norfolk and Catesby, he cried, "A horse, a horse! my kingdom for a horse!" Catesby prayed him to withdraw; but Richard called him slave, and said he had set his life upon a cast and he would stand the hazard of the die. "I think there be six Richmonds in the field," quoth he. "Five I have slain to-day instead of him," and once again he called for a horse.

But at this juncture the true Richmond, who for safety had armed five knights in armor like his own, came in sight, and immediately he and the king fell to fighting, when, after several blows between them, Richard was slain.

"God and our arms be praised, victorious friends!" cried the devout Richmond upon thus vanquishing his and England's foe; and Stanley, snatching the crown from Richard's brow, placed it upon the head of the Earl of Richmond, saying,

"Lo here these long-usurped royalties have I plucked off from the dead temples of this bloody wretch to grace thy brows withal. Wear it, enjoy it, and make much of it."

Richmond gave thanks to God, and then asked, anxiously, if his brother, George Stanley, were living. His father assured him that he was safe in Leicester town; whither, he said, if the earl pleased, they should also withdraw them.

Richmond was well pleased with this; and giving orders for the burial of his fallen soldiers, he said that, having taken the sacrament, he would, by marrying King Edward's daughter, unite at last the white rose and the red, and end the divisions which had long rent the kingdom, so that hereafter the time should be enriched with smiling plenty and fair prosperous days.

KING HENRY VIII.

CARDINAL WOLSEY, who had risen from a butcher's son to be the Archbishop of York and the favourite of King Henry the Eighth, had, at the time when this history opens, reached the height of his power. He lived in royal magnificence outrivalling the king himself, and could, with his vast influence in Henry's counsels and with the power gained by his sagacious and crafty methods of governing the kingdom, do what he would with the king's subjects high and low. In all this his sovereign indulged him without question, for he had a perfect faith in the lord cardinal's honesty, and valued much his wisdom in affairs.

It was therefore not strange that Cardinal Wolsey should have many enemies, for a king's love is a danger as well as a grace, begetting in rivals and lesser lords a jealousy which overcomes conscience.

Among the powerful foes which the cardinal's ambition had won for him, the foremost was the Duke of Buckingham, who, proud of his own noble birth and rich in hereditary possessions, was in-

censed that one of such mean extraction and small belongings should supplant him in the king's favor.

Buckingham, being of an impulsive and outspoken nature, could not conceal his hatred of Cardinal Wolsey, but the crafty cardinal knew better how to work out his enmities in secret, and he set spies to watch this haughty duke, who discovered a small fault, which, by false witnesses and the insinuations of the cardinal, was soon magnified into a grave treason against the crown.

For this the king, notwithstanding his love for Buckingham and his great qualities of mind, condemned him, after a trial in which he failed to clear himself, to execution upon the block.

But Buckingham had been the close friend of King Henry's queen, Katharine, and she had made earnest entreaties of his majesty to save the duke's life, hinting at the same time that it was through the malice of Cardinal Wolsey that he was come to such sad estate. She also begged King Henry to examine into the oppressive taxes which the cardinal had, unknown to the king, imposed upon his subjects; and all this wounded the pride of the great prelate, who was also the lord chancellor of the realm, so that in his heart he resolved to cast the queen down from her high place and bring her to shame.

Now, it was rumoured at this time that the king had begun to take notice of one of the queen's ladies-in-waiting named Anne Bullen, and this lady,

with many more noble dames and lords, the cardinal one night invited to a great banquet at his palace. This palace of York Place, as it was called, was a lordly house, fit for the king himself, and in it the one-time butcher's son, who was now the most powerful lord in England, had collected all the costly luxuries and rich furnitures which the world afforded. He kept a state almost equal to his master's, and his servants and followers were nobles of the realm.

When, on this occasion, the guests were all arrived, Sir Henry Guildford saluted them in Cardinal Wolsey's name, saying his grace dedicated that night to fair content, and to them, hoping none there had brought one care abroad. Then, when they were placed at table, and gallants and ladies began pretty speeches and pleasant laughter, the cardinal, attended by his servants, came grandly in and took his seat under a canopy of state, where was a small table for himself alone. "You are welcome, my fair guests," he said, and to confirm his welcome he drank to the good health of all there. Lord Sands, who sat next Anne Bullen, called for such a bowl as might hold his thanks and save him so much talking; and the cardinal said he was beholden to him, bidding him cheer his neighbours. "Ladies, you are not merry," quoth he. Lord Sands gaily said the red wine must first rise in their fair cheeks, and then they would talk the men to silence. Upon this Lady Anne said his lordship was a merry gamester; and in return

he pledged her, bidding his grace, the host, mark that he had said they would talk anon.

But as all went on thus happily, there came a sudden sound of drums and trumpets without doors, then the discharge of firearms. "What's that?" asked the cardinal; and his chamberlain bid one look out and see what had happened. The cardinal, meanwhile, reassured the ladies with a pleasant jest, bidding them to fear not, for they were privileged by all the laws of war.

When the servant came back, he said that the noise was made by a noble troop of strangers who had left their barge and landed, making thither like great ambassadors from foreign princes. Wolsey sent his lord chamberlain to give them welcome and he commanded him to receive them nobly, and conduct them into his presence, where the heaven of beauty at his board should shine at full upon them. "Some attend him," he added; and as the chamberlain and his attendants went forth, all the guests arose and the tables were removed. "You have now a broken banquet," said his grace, "but we'll mend it;" and as he promised this, the maskers came in amid the sounds of music. There were thirteen in the band, habited like shepherds, and with them came sixteen torch-bearers gaily dressed, and led by the lord chamberlain. They passed directly before Cardinal Wolsey and gracefully saluted him. "A noble company," said he to the chamberlain, and he asked what were their pleasures. The chamber-

lain replied that because they spoke no English they prayed him to tell his grace that having heard by fame of the so noble and fair assembly to meet there that night, they could do no less, out of the great respect they bore to beauty, but desert their flocks, and crave leave to view the ladies and entreat an hour of revel with them. The cardinal bid the chamberlain reply that the strangers had done his poor house a grace for which he paid them a thousand thanks and prayed them take their pleasures. Then each shepherd chose a lady for the dance, a certain tall and courtly swain choosing Mistress Anne Bullen, to whom he whispered, as he took her hand, "The fairest hand I ever touched! O beauty, till now I never knew thee." Seeing this, Cardinal Wolsey bid the chamberlain go tell the strangers from him that he conceived there was one among them more worthy of the place he sat in than himself, to whom, if he but knew him, he would surrender it, with his love and duty.

They confessed there was such a one among them; but, the more to prolong the mirth, they challenged the cardinal to find him out, and he would take the proffered seat. "Let me see, then," said the cardinal, pretending he did not well know beforehand who his visitors were. "By all your leaves, good gentlemen," he continued, scanning the group, "here I'll make my royal choice."

Then the king, for it was he whom Wolsey had selected, took off his mask and said, with a great

laugh, "You have found him, cardinal!" and he praised his chancellor's fair assembly, saying he did well, for he was a churchman, or else he had judged unhappily of him for such levity.

Drawing the cardinal aside, yet still keeping his eyes upon Mistress Anne Bullen, the king asked, "What fair lady is that?" The cardinal told him it was Sir Thomas Bullen's daughter, one of the queen's women. "By heaven, she is a dainty one," quoth King Henry; and approaching her, he said aloud, "Sweetheart, I were unmannerly to take you out and not to kiss you," then, giving her a buss upon the lips, he lifted his glass, and called out, "A health, gentlemen. Let it go round." By this the banquet was ready in the privy chamber, and all the company withdrew thither, the king leading in Lady Anne, to whom he whispered many soft and flattering words.

Now it proved afterwards that the cardinal had in all this planned even against his own designs, for though, to satisfy his spite against the queen, he slyly set afloat rumours of the king's separation from her, yet his choice of a consort to take her place had fallen, for politic reasons, upon the French king's sister and by no means on this humble lady of the court. But as yet he was unaware of the deep impression made on the king's heart by the beautiful Anne Bullen, and day by day he continued his covert circulation of gossip about the queen, thus unwittingly aiding the king to elevate Lady Anne to the throne. King Henry

angrily sent to the lord mayor to have the rumours of his divorce denied, yet possessing, as they did, a morsel of truth and being industriously spread in spite of the king, it was known before very long that his majesty really did mean to put his faithful spouse and noble queen from him.

In order to give this separation a show of legal justice the cardinal had contrived to bring to his aid the power of the pope at Rome, who now sent to England, as his representative in the business, Cardinal Campeius, and he, with Cardinal Wolsey, put forth all his craft to win the king from his loving queen through seeming duty to his faith.

The great lords about the king saw well how his majesty was being made the tool of these cunning prelates; but they durst not utter their suspicions to King Henry, though they talked freely enough among themselves. "How holily he works in all his business!" said the Duke of Norfolk of Cardinal Wolsey, and he told how the haughty churchman had cracked the league between England and the emperor, who was the queen's nephew; and how he dived into the king's soul, there scattering dangers, doubts, wringing of the conscience, fears, and despairs about his marriage, and how, to restore the king out of all these, he counselled a divorce. The duke, in his indignation, said that this meant a loss of her that, like a jewel, had hung about the king's neck for twenty years, yet never lost her lustre, of her that loved him with that excellence that angels love good men with,

even of her that when the greatest stroke of fortune should fall would still bless the king. At this the lord chamberlain prayed heaven to keep him from such counsel, and the Duke of Suffolk, that they might be freed from the cardinal's slavery. "We had need pray for our deliverance, and heartily," quoth Norfolk, "or this imperious man will work us all from princes into pages."

But the cardinal was not to be turned from his triumphant course by the frowns of his fellow-nobles, and he and the Cardinal Campeius plied the king with good reasons for his divorce, sure that they were but following his majesty's inclinations, and so pleasing him that no rival could supplant them in his favour. To this end they agreed with the king that the queen's trial should take place at Blackfriars, and the king bid Wolsey see that the place was properly furnished, and that Queen Katharine should have scholars allowed freely to argue for her, for he said it grieved him sore to leave so sweet a wife, but he added, "Conscience, conscience,—O 'tis a tender place, and I must leave her:" for thus he feigned to himself to justify his ungrateful act.

But in the mean time, before the trial took place, as Anne Bullen one day stood debating with an old lady of the court on the queen's sad fate, the lord chamberlain came to her from the king, saying that his majesty commended his good opinion to her and did propose the honour to her of creating her marchioness of Pembroke, to which

title he had added, out of his grace, a thousand pound a year. This much surprised the Lady Anne, for she did not yet suspect the king's attachment to her. She besought his lordship to vouchsafe her thanks to his gracious majesty, and to give him her obedience as from a blushing handmaid; and this the lord chamberlain gladly consented to do, for he had perused her well, and he inwardly thought that beauty and honour were so mingled in her that it was no wonder they had caught the king.

But that his majesty was deeply smitten by the beauty of his new favourite was a matter beyond dispute, and he allowed the cardinal to carry forward the preparations for the queen's trial with relentless haste. When the day arrived, the king entered the hall in Blackfriars with great ceremony, attended by all his officers of state in their princeliest array. He took his seat under the cloth of state, and the two cardinals sat below him as judges. Presently the queen, followed by her train, also came in, and took a seat at some distance from the king. The bishops placed themselves on either side in manner of a court of law, and below them sat the scribes, while the court and the rest of the attendants stood in convenient order about them.

The scribe bid the crier summon the king, who answered; and then the queen, in turn; but she kept silent, only rising from her chair and going to the king before whom she knelt. "O sir," she

said, "do me right and justice and bestow your pity on me, for I am a most poor woman and a stranger born out of your dominions, having here no impartial judge, nor no more assurance of equal friendship and proceeding." Then she asked him pathetically to tell her in what she had offended him, what cause her behaviour had given for his displeasure, that thus he should put her off and take his good grace from her? She called heaven to witness that she had been a true and humble wife to him, and asked, when was the hour she had ever contradicted his desire, or which of his friends had she not striven to love although she knew he was her enemy? And she called to his mind that she had been his wife in such obedience for twenty years and had been blest with many children by him; wherefore she humbly besought him to spare her till she might be advised by her friends in Spain, whose counsel, she said, she would implore; but if he would not, she dutifully said his pleasure should, in the name of God, be fulfilled.

The cardinal saw that the queen's prayer made a deep effect upon the king, and he strove to prevent delay by telling her that the reverend fathers who had been chosen to plead her cause were men of singular integrity and learning, and it would therefore be bootless for her to desire the postponement of the trial. In this Wolsey was supported by the cardinal from Rome; but Queen Katharine did not heed him, but turned to Wolsey, saying, "Lord cardinal, to you I speak." "Your pleasure,

madam," said he; and she then poured out upon him all the bitterness of her heart. "I do believe," she said, "induced by potent circumstances, that you are mine enemy, and I make my challenge that you shall not be my judge; for it is you hath blown this coal betwixt my lord and me, which God's dew quench!"

The cardinal was enraged, thus to be branded her foe before the whole court, and he inwardly chafed against her words, but he was too politic to show his enmity openly, and answered with measured syllables, that she spoke not like herself. "Madam," he said, "you do me wrong. I have no spleen against you, nor injustice for you, or any one. How far I have proceeded is warranted by a commission from the consistory of Rome." And, he said, his majesty being present, he might well punish him for falsehood if all he uttered were not true. She said she was a simple woman, much too weak to oppose his cunning, and that though he seemed full meek and humble, yet his heart was crammed with arrogance, spleen, and pride, for he had, by fortune and the king's favours, gone slightly over low steps and now was mounted where powers were his retainers. Again she refused him for her judge, and before all present appealed to the pope for judgment. She then courtesied to the king and offered to depart; but she was interrupted by the Roman cardinal who charged her with being obstinate and stubborn to justice; and as she continued to retire, the

crier, at the king's command, called her again; but she went out in spite of them, and thus put them the more to shame and closed the trial. "Go thy ways, Kate," said the king, with softening heart, "the man in the world who shall report he has a better wife, let him in nought be trusted."

Cardinal Wolsey heard this with dismay, for the king's change of heart meant the overthrow not only of his ambitions but of all his power, and he rose and made an appeal to his majesty that he should please to declare in the hearing of all present whether he had broached this business to the king, or if he had not rather laid scruples in the king's way which might induce his majesty to question it; or if he had ever spoken the least word that might prejudice the queen in her husband's eyes.

As the politic cardinal had been most guarded in all he did, working rather through others and by insinuation than by any direct measures which might bring him into suspicion, the king was well within the truth in saying that Wolsey was in no wise to blame; and his majesty then told how his conscience had first received a tenderness, scruple, or prick, that it was not well for him to have wedded his dead brother's wife. It grew, he said, out of certain speeches uttered by the Bishop of Bayonne, then the French ambassador, who had been sent thither on the debating a marriage between the Duke of Orleans and his daugh-

ter Mary; for in the progress of this business the bishop had asked a respite, wherein he might determine whether the Princess Mary were legitimate respecting the king's marriage with the dowager, sometime the wife of his brother. And King Henry was, he said, the more urged to think upon this, because, seeing his queen had never given him a male child, he began to believe there was a judgment on him. He then weighed the danger that his realms stood in by this failure of his issue and this gave him many a groaning throe. Hence he steered, he said, towards this remedy to his conscience. He then appealed to several of the prelates whom he had consulted upon the matter, and thus Cardinal Wolsey, who had inflamed if not invented the discord, was freed from blame.

The court was now broken up, and the king and his nobles departed; but deep within himself the king began to perceive that the cardinals trifled with him, keeping him from his object by dilatory sloth and tricks of Rome, and he resolved to recall his learned and well-beloved Cranmer to him, for with this prelate's approach he knew his comfort came along.

By some strange fatality, shortly after this Cardinal Wolsey committed a grave error which finally cost him the king's favour and the loss of all his dignities and possessions; for, in sending a packet of papers to his majesty, he, by strange negligence, put in it the account of all the world of wealth he

had drawn together to gain the popedom and fee his friends at Rome; and, worse even than this, he accidentally included a letter from himself to the pope wherein he had entreated his holiness to stay the judgment of the divorce: "for," said the letter, "I do perceive my king is tangled in affection to a creature of the queen's, Lady Anne Bullen."

When King Henry had opened these papers he read with amazement of the piles of wealth the chancellor had accumulated to his own portion, and wondered how, in the name of thrift, he had raked this all together. Coming into his antechamber when the Dukes of Suffolk and Norfolk were whispering together of this same subject, he asked them if they had seen the cardinal. They said they had, for he had just left them, and told him some strange commotion seemed to stir his brain, for, quoth they, he bit his lips and started, stopped on a sudden, and looked upon the ground, showing all the signs of a troubled spirit. "It may well be," said the king, and he told them of the papers he had just read.

But the cardinal's agitation was caused by rumour of the king's wedding with Anne Bullen, and by the rise in royal favour of Cranmer, whom Wolsey began to fear. He had not yet learned of the mistake he had made with the papers, so that when the king sent for him, he came into his presence with his wonted gravity. "Heaven forgive me!" quoth he. "Ever God bless your high-

ness!" But the king made a light answer. "Good my lord," he said, "you are full of heavenly stuff, and bear the inventory of your best graces in your mind. I presume that, as my hand has opened bounty to you, my heart dropped love, my power rained honour more on you than any, so your hand and heart and your brain should be more to me, your friend, than any." The cardinal professed he had ever laboured for his highness' good more than his own; and though the whole world should crack their duty to him, yet his loyalty should stand unshaken.

The king said this was nobly spoken, and he called upon the lords about him to take notice that the cardinal had a loyal breast, for they had seen him open it. Then he handed Wolsey, one by one, the papers he had been reading, and told him that after he had perused them he could go to breakfast with what appetite he might have. He went out with a frown upon his late favourite, and all the nobles, smiling and whispering at the cardinal's discomfiture, thronged after him.

Wolsey looked into the papers the king had given him for an explanation of his majesty's sudden anger, and there he learned his fatal mistake. "Nay, then, farewell!" he murmured. "I have touched the highest point of all my greatness, and from that full meridian of my glory I haste now to my setting."

As the cardinal mused thus, the Dukes of Norfolk and Suffolk, with the Earl of Surrey and the

lord chamberlain, came back from the king and bid him hear his majesty's pleasure; which was that he should render up at once into their hands the great seal, and that till he heard further from the king he should confine himself to Asher-house. Wolsey frowned grimly upon them, and asked where was their commission, for words could not, he said, carry authority so weighty; and as they could give nothing but the king's spoken commands, the cardinal refused to heed them. This brought hot words from the nobles, who openly charged the prelate with all the wrongs he was known to have committed, which hitherto they had been withheld from uttering by his great power to do them harm. They further told him that the king's pleasure was that, because all those things he had done of late by his power as legate fell within the compass of the law, he should forfeit all his goods, lands, tenements, and whatsoever he possessed, and that he should be out of the king's protection. "And so," said Norfolk, "we'll leave you to your meditations how to live better;" upon which they parted from him, who in his heart felt all the bitterness of a ruined man. "Farewell, a long farewell to all my greatness," he moaned, and he thought how this was the state of man: To-day to put forth the tender leaves of hope; to-morrow blossom, and bear his blushing honours thick upon him; the third day comes a killing frost and—when he thinks, good easy man, full surely his

greatness is a-ripening—nips his root, and then he falls.

But his thoughts were interrupted by the entrance of Cromwell, his servant, to whom he told what had happened, saying the king had cured him and given him a peace above all earthly dignities, a still and quiet conscience, having plucked from his shoulders a load that would sink a navy. Cromwell told him that Sir Thomas More had already been chosen lord chancellor in his stead; that Cranmer had returned to the king and had been installed Lord Archbishop of Canterbury; and, lastly, that the Lady Anne, whom the king had in secrecy long ago married, was that day openly acknowledged as his queen, and the public gossip was now only about her coronation. "There was the weight that pulled me down," muttered Wolsey. "O Cromwell, the king has gone beyond me; I have lost all my glories in that one woman forever;" and he bid his servant go from him, for he was but a poor fallen man, and advised him to seek the king, who he said would advance him. Cromwell was loyal to the last, grieving to desert so good a master, and this brought tears to the eyes of the cardinal, for among all those who had received his favours this was the only one who showed him pity. He bid Cromwell, therefore, to rise, but to shun the ways he had trod. "Cromwell," he said, "I charge thee to fling away ambition. By that sin fell the angels; how can man, then, the image of his Maker, hope

to win by it? Love thyself last; cherish those hearts that hate thee;" and with this good counsel and much more that was wrung from his broken mind, the cardinal bid Cromwell lead him in, and there take an inventory of all he possessed, for it was the king's. His robe, he said, and his integrity to Heaven was all he durst now call his own. At length he broke out, "O Cromwell, Cromwell, had I but served my God with half the zeal I served my king, he would not in mine age have left me naked to mine enemies!" and with this last wail of a broken heart he gave up all his earthly possessions to the crown.

While this was happening in the palace the queen's case was proceeding elsewhere. Cranmer, now the Archbishop of Canterbury, in whom the king felt he could confide, held a court, with certain other learned and reverend fathers of his order, at Dunstable, six miles off from Ampthill, where the queen lay. But though she was repeatedly summoned to their presence, she refused to appear, for which, and because of the king's late scruple, by the assent of all these learned men she was declared divorced and her marriage made of no effect. After this the queen was removed to Kimbolton, where she remained sick from her heavy trials.

The king, however, took little count of this, but pushed forward eagerly the coronation of his new queen, the Lady Anne Bullen, who was greeted with happy shouts of welcome when she went with

King Henry to Westminster Abbey to receive the crown. One spectator said to his neighbour that she had the sweetest face he ever looked on; and another, with words of praise for her modesty, told how she came to the altar and took the emblems of her majesty, then parted and, with the same full state as when coming, paced back again to York-place, where the feast was held. His neighbour chid him for calling it York-place, for that had passed with Wolsey. Since he fell, so said the gossip, that title was lost. The place was now the king's, and called Whitehall.

Cardinal Wolsey did not long survive his downfall, for he was arrested at York by the stout Earl of Northumberland, and when he was brought forward to answer the charges against him, he grew so ill that he could not sit his mule. At last, with easy roads he came to Leicester and lodged in the abbey, where the reverend abbot with all his convent honourably received him, to whom he spoke his woes, and begged that he might lay his bones among them, asking a little earth for charity. So he went to bed, where his sickness eagerly pursued him, and three nights after this, about the hour of eight, which he himself foretold should be his last, full of repentance, continual meditations, tears, and sorrows, he gave his honours to the world again and delivered up his blessed part to heaven, and slept in peace.

Thus humbly died this once-powerful lord, whose faults were many, as of ambition, of untruths and

double-dealing, and of lack of pity; yet his virtues were greatly seen in his ripe and good scholarship, exceeding wisdom, sweetness to those he loved, and princely giving.

But in the busy life of the court his fall was but the gossip of a week, and then the new favourites claimed the tongues of all. These were Cromwell, who, beside being made master of the Jewel-House, was created master of the rolls and the king's secretary; and Cranmer, who, said the courtiers, was become the king's hand and tongue, so much had he risen in the royal esteem, and none dared say one syllable against him.

But Bishop Gardiner, who held to the strict doctrines of Rome upon which Cranmer was in opinion more free, was for this secretly the archbishop's enemy, and endeavoured to incense the lords of the king's council against him as a most arch heretic and, as he charged, a pestilence that did infect the mind. The council was something moved by Gardiner's appeal, and the king seemed inclined to give ear to its complaint, for upon hearing it he commanded that Cranmer be called to the council-board on the morrow and there questioned upon his heresies.

But this was merely a device of King Henry's the better to protect his favourite from the harm intended him by Gardiner. He secretly sent for Cranmer, and bid him walk a turn with him in the gallery while he unfolded the plot intended to do him injury. He said he had, most unwillingly,

KING HENRY VIII.

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heard many grievous complaints of late against Cranmer, which, being considered, the council had moved that morning that he come before them, where, said the king, he feared the archbishop could not free himself so fully as to avoid going, till further trial, to the Tower. His majesty gave as his reason for this that Cranmer being, as it were, a brother of his, no witness would otherwise dare to give evidence against him. The archbishop kneeled upon hearing this, and said he was right glad to catch so good an occasion to be winnowed of his chaff, for he knew there was none stood under more calumnious tongues than himself. The king bid him stand up, and said his truth and his integrity was rooted in him, his friend. Then again they walked to and fro, and King Henry warned Cranmer against his foes, saying he wooed his own destruction by not heeding better their crafty practices. Cranmer prayed God and his majesty to protect him; and the king bid him be of good cheer, for they should no more prevail against him than he give way to them. "Keep comfort to you," he said, "and this morning see you do appear before them; if they shall chance to commit you, fail not to use the best persuasion to the contrary; but if entreaties will render you no remedy, deliver them this ring, and make your appeal to us there before them." Cranmer humbly took the ring with tears in his eyes at his sovereign's grace; and King Henry vowed to him as they parted that he believed he was true at heart,

and that there was not a better soul in his kingdom.

The next morning Cranmer appeared in the lobby before the council-chamber, and though he was a member of the council and it was his right to enter, yet the door-keeper denied him admittance, saying he must wait until he be called for. As the archbishop, with his wonted humility, resolved to do as he was bid, Doctor Butts, the physician to the king, came by, and seeing him there, exclaimed that it was a piece of malice to keep him from his seat, and went speedily to the king with the news of the affront to his favourite. Cranmer, noting the doctor's keen look at him, feared he had discovered his disgrace that he, a fellow-chancellor, should be made to wait there among boys, grooms, and lackeys; but Butts divined the wrong done him and went straight to his majesty, whom he drew to a window and pointed out, as he said, the strangest sight his highness had seen this many a day.

When the king saw Cranmer thus dishonoured at the door of the council-chamber, he was enraged at his council; but told Butts to let them alone and draw the curtains close, for they should hear more anon.

Within doors the council was seated and proceeding to business, with the lord chancellor at the head and Cromwell, as secretary, at the foot of the board. Presently they bid the archbishop to come in; and when he had approached the coun-

cil-table, the lord chancellor charged him with misdemeaning himself towards the king and the laws in filling the whole realm with new opinions, divers and dangerous. Bishop Gardiner then took up the case and predicted commotions, and uproars, with a general taint of the whole state, unless the archbishop should instantly reform.

Cranmer, with much mildness of temper, denied that he intended heresy, and asked that his accusers might be made to stand forth against him; whereupon the suggestion that the king had told him of, that he should go to the Tower, was made by his enemy Gardiner, for this vindictive prelate said they had business of more moment before them and must be short with him. At this, Cranmer turned upon his assailant and told him he saw his purpose, which was his undoing, and he said love and meekness became a churchman better than ambition. Gardiner, in turn, accused him of being a sectary, at which Cromwell chided the bishop for his little respect, for 'twas, he said, cruelty to load a fallen man. Gardiner in turn charged the secretary with unsoundness of doctrine, and Cromwell returned that he would the bishop were half as honest.

Many angry speeches passed between the members of the council, and at last Gardiner said to Cranmer that it stood agreed by all the voices that he be conveyed a prisoner to the Tower, to remain there till the king's further pleasure be known, whereupon he called the guard, and the archbishop

would have been taken away but that he now brought forth the king's ring and said, by that token he took his cause out of the gripes of cruel men and gave it to a most noble judge, the king, his master.

There was no mistaking the ring, and all the council save Cromwell were seized with dismay at what they had done. The more to increase their fear, at this moment the king came in, and frowning upon them, took his seat at the board.

Bishop Gardiner greeted his majesty with many flatteries and commendations; but he waved these aside, for, he said, in his presence they were too thin and base to hide offences. "Good man, sit down," quoth he to Cranmer, who was still standing; and he dared the proudest there to but wag his finger at the archbishop, for such an one had better starve than but once think the place became him not.

Thus thundering forth his anger his majesty brought his disobedient lords to his will, and he bid them respect the archbishop, take him and use him well, for if a prince might be beholden to a subject, he said he was, for his love and service.

Then, when they had each embraced Cranmer at the king's command, and the angry contention was stilled, his majesty turned to the archbishop and told him that he had a suit which he hoped he would not deny him, which was that a certain fair young maid wanted baptism, and he would have Cranmer be godfather and answer for her.

The archbishop joyfully assented to this, asking how a poor and humble subject might deserve such honour? The fair young maid was a daughter of the king, who had just been born to him by Anne Bullen; and saying he longed to have this young one made a Christian, King Henry withdrew, with all the lords, to the christening of the Princess Elizabeth, who, Archbishop Cranmer said, with prophetic words, should shower upon England a thousand thousand blessings, for she should be a pattern to all princes living with her and all that should succeed, and he predicted for her a long and noble life, till, like a most unspotted lily, she should pass to the ground and all the world should mourn her.

CORIOLANUS.

IN the midst of an uprising of the people of Rome, who blamed the senate and the patricians because they suffered from hunger, there was, on a sudden, news brought to the elders that the Volces were in arms, and Cominius, the consul, with Titus Lartius and Caius Marcius, were chosen to lead the Roman forces against these rebels.

This Caius Marcius was of noble birth, being the descendant of Numa, an early king of Rome; but he was in no wise dependent on this for his fame, but rather upon his great valour, for at sixteen years he had fought beyond the mark of others against the tyrant Tarquin, and made him kneel under his warlike blows, and since that time he had won the garland in seventeen battles against the enemies of Rome.

He had, however, gained the reputation among the common people of Rome of being overbearing and proud; but this was not from vanity, but rather the expression of a noble spirit which would not condescend to advance his interests by flatteries and craft. Love for good men he always showed,

and help and kindliness; but he could not bring himself to pander to the wishes of the multitude, as politicians and leaders are often wont to do, and this made him unpopular with the turbulent citizens.

But with the soldiers, Caius Marcius was ever a favourite, though he led them into desperate ventures and ruled them with unbending discipline; and this was because of his invincible courage and success, for he had never yet lost a battle.

Among the Volcians there was a valiant leader called Tullus Aufidius, and these two were mortal foes, though so great was the prowess of Aufidius that Marcius said, were half to half of the world by the ears and this soldier upon his party, he would revolt to make only his wars with him, for he was a lion he would be proud to hunt.

Now, it fell out that these two warriors presently met before the Volcian city of Corioli in this wise: Marcius had led his soldiers against that city and they had been driven back, whereupon he scored them with bitter words, which brought them speedily to the attack once more. This time they forced the Volces to fly within their gates; but Marcius, who himself led his men, followed too closely upon the enemy's heels, and still fighting single-handed, he was shut in with his foes. When his fellow-leader, Titus Lartius, asked where he was and found he was imprisoned behind the gates, he gave him up for lost; but Marcius proved his valor by appearing in a little space from the gates, still as-

saulted by the enemy and sadly wounded. This sight moved all the courage in the Roman breasts, and they flew in haste to their captain's assistance, and presently brought him safely off.

Marcius, all stained with blood from his many wounds, none of which happily were fatal, would not permit his friends to detain him with idle praise, but asked at once for Tullus Aufidius, saying he would seek him out and fight with him. This warrior was not among the Volci who defended Corioli; but, as it proved, he led the ranks which opposed the Roman general Cominius on the ground without the town. Marcius therefore hastened away to join Cominius, whom he soon found a mile away, but retreating before the Volci. When he came up with his fellow-leader, he was welcomed gladly, and Cominius told him that he was retiring rather to win his purpose than because of defeat. He then asked on which flank of the Volcian army Aufidius led, and learned that he was in command of the Antiates of their best trust. Marcius besought Cominius by all the battles in which they had fought together, by the vows of friendship they had sworn, that he directly set him in the field over against Aufidius and his Antiates, and that without delay he should open the battle anew.

Cominius said that though he could wish his friend were conducted to a gentle bath and balms applied to his wounds, yet he dared never deny his asking, and he bid him take his choice of such

soldiers as best could aid him, and pick the place he would in the front of the battle.

When Marcius asked what men were most willing to bear him company in the action, the whole force shouted and waved their swords, cast up their caps, and strove to take him in their arms; but he said none should go save such as were able to bear against the great Aufidius a shield as hard as his own, and he selected the number he wanted, and with them marched on.

In the midst of the fight which followed Marcius and Aufidius, after seeking each other for some time, finally met and gave defiance. "I'll fight with none but thee, for I do hate thee worse than a promise-breaker," said Marcius; and Aufidius returned that they hated alike, for Africa owned no serpent he abhorred more than Marcius's fame. "Fix thy foot!" he shouted, and they set to, resolved to die rather than yield; but in this they were thwarted by some Volcians, who flew to Aufidius's rescue and shamed him by their officious conduct. The fight between the champions was thus for the time postponed, and again, as more than thrice before, neither was certain victor, notwithstanding that Marcius seemed to have the advantage.

But in the contest of the armies the Romans were undoubted conquerors. The city of Corioli had been taken by Lartius and Marcius, and Cominius and Marcius had triumphed in the field. His fellow-leaders were therefore fain to acknowledge

Marcius the hero of the fight, for, as said Cominius, if he told over to Marcius his own deeds of that day, he himself would not believe them, so noble and so valiant were they.

To this Titus Lartius added his praise without limit, until Marcius in very shame to hear his virtues so celebrated cried out against it, saying he had done as the rest had done, which was what he could, induced, as they had been, by love of his country. Cominius said he should not bury his deserving within himself, for Rome must know the value of her own. Marcius said he had some wounds upon him and they smarted to hear themselves remembered; but Cominius would not permit this modest estimate of himself, and he commanded that of all the horses and treasure they had captured Marcius should be rendered a tenth, to be taken forth before the common distribution. This the brave warrior refused to do, saying he could not make his heart consent to take a bribe to pay his sword, whereupon the whole army in admiration of his generous spirit cast up their caps and lances, crying, "Marcius! Marcius!" while Cominius and Lartius stood bare-headed out of respect for their noble fellow-leader. "Too modest are you; more cruel to your good report than grateful to us that give you truly," said Cominius, and he insisted that it be known that Caius Marcius wore that war's garland; in token of which he gave him his noble steed with all his trim belonging; and he decreed that from that time forth, for

what Marcius did at Corioli, he should ever be called Caius Marcius Coriolanus.

The whole force triumphantly shouted out this name, but so loath was Marcius to hear his own praise that he went blushing away. Before he parted from Cominius, however, he asked a single favour, which was the freedom of his late host in Corioli, an old and poor man who had used him kindly in his house. He said he saw him prisoner when Lartius had taken the town, but then Aufidius was within his view, and wrath had overwhelmed his pity.

This request Cominius granted even before it was asked, but Marcius had forgot the poor man's name; and so, vexed at his folly, he went pondering to his tent.

Having thus conquered their foes, Cominius and his army marched straightway back to Rome, at whose gates they were received with much rejoicing and unbounded praise. In the midst of the triumphant procession came Coriolanus, crowned with an oaken garland; and when all had entered the city, Cominius began to tell of this warrior's great deeds of martial daring.

"Welcome to Rome, renowned Coriolanus," shouted the glad multitudes, and they could not enough speak their delight in his achievements for his country and his people. But Marcius grew impatient at such outbursts, saying, "No more of this; it does offend my heart," and he prayed them again and again to cease the shouting.

Just at this moment his mother, Volumnia, approached, and he immediately knelt before her. "Nay, my good soldier, up!" she said, and asked, with a mother's pride, if she must now call him Coriolanus. His wife was also of the company, and she wept for joy to see him safely back, whereat he told her that the widows and mothers that lacked sons in Corioli wore such eyes, and he chid her gaily for her tears.

Then he turned and welcomed all his friends; after which he parted with the Roman generals for the Capitol. When they had arrived thither and taken their seats, with the senators and the tribunes of the people about them, Menenius, an aged lord, arose and asked the most reverend and grave elders to desire the present consul, Cominius, to give his report of the worthy work performed by Coriolanus, whom, he said, they had met there both to thank and to endow with consular honours. The senators urged Cominius to speak, and requested the consent of the masters of the people to what they meant to do, upon which Sicinius and Brutus, the tribunes, arose in turn and favoured the choice of Coriolanus, but Brutus warned him that he must remember a kinder value of the people than he had hitherto shown. At this Coriolanus arose and offered to go; but a senator told him not to be ashamed to hear what he had so nobly done, and Brutus said he hoped his words had not driven him away. Coriolanus answered this last that he loved the people as they weighed; but he would

not stay, saying he had rather have some one scratch his head in the sun when the alarm were struck, than idly sit and have his nothings exaggerated. Hence he went forth, and Menenius and Cominius then passed eulogies upon him, speaking his praise in every branch of war, until, at last, the senators called to have him back, and he returned to hear their will. "The senate are well pleased to make thee consul," said Menenius; and Coriolanus answered that he owed them always his life and services.

It then remained that the consul elected by the senate should be voted for by the people; but so distasteful was this to Coriolanus that he besought them to let him overleap that custom, for he said he could not put on the napless gown of humility and entreat the citizens for his wounds' sake to give him their suffrage. "Sir," said Sicinius, sternly, for he was the people's tribune, "the people must have their voices; neither will they bate one jot of ceremony."

Old Menenius, the friend of Coriolanus, implored him not to put them to this test, and he prayed him go fit himself to the custom, and take to him, as his predecessors had done, his honour with his form. Coriolanus said it was a part he should blush in acting, and that the right might well be taken from the people. "Mark you that?" exclaimed Brutus, the tribune, and when the senators had retired, he said to his fellow-tribune, Sicinius, "You see how he intends to use the people!" "May they

perceive his intent!" was the reply, for both these men hated Coriolanus for his success as well as for his pride, as is often the use towards nobler men of those who fatten upon the public spoils.

In a brief space, however, Coriolanus was induced by Menenius and the senators to bow to the people's will, and he appeared in the market-place clothed in the gown of humility. Then the citizens, as was the custom, went up to him by ones and twos, and he made his request for the vote of each man who approached him.

The hero of Corioli was little used to bend the knee to any one, and he was most awkward in all his actions towards these Roman citizens whom he so despised. "Bid them wash their faces and keep their teeth clean," he said to Menenius; and as two men came up to him he said, "You know the cause, sir, of my standing here?" The citizens answered that they did, but asked him to tell them what had brought him to it. "Mine own desert, and not mine own desire," said Coriolanus, boldly. "How!" exclaimed the citizens unused to such frankness in one who solicited their votes; and they told him that if they gave him anything they hoped to gain by him, and hence their desire to know his virtues. "Well, then," said Coriolanus, abruptly, "I pray you the price of the consulship?" "The price is to ask it kindly," answered one of the citizens. "Kindly, sir, then," said the warrior, "I pray let me have it; I have wounds to show you in private." And with this the citi-

zens were well pleased and said that he should have it.

Others came up to him in turn, who praised his loyalty and valour or objected that he had not loved the common people, and he answered all alike with a defiant candour which would have quite ruined the chances of a lesser candidate.

But, at last, Coriolanus stood out his limitation, and the tribunes duly declared that he had won the people's voice. It then remained only that he should meet the senate in his official robes, and with great rejoicing he took off his humble weeds and became himself again.

But now the citizens, who in the presence of this valiant soldier had given their votes, became emboldened in his absence to gainsay them, and they went to the tribunes with their complaints against him for his irreverent manner of asking their voices as well as for his long-known enmity against them.

This the tribunes were only too glad to heed, and they bid the citizens get hence instantly and tell all who would, to assemble and revoke the ignorant election, for that Coriolanus was not yet confirmed by the senate, and, if they hastened, they could be beforehand with that ceremony. "Say you never had done it but by our putting on," quoth the crafty Brutus; "and presently, when you have drawn your number together, repair to the Capitol." "We will so!" cried the citizens, and each party went its several way, the tribunes going straightway to the Capitol.

As Coriolanus and Lartius, who was newly returned from Corioli, spoke together in the street, Lartius told him that the Volces had gathered new head, being ready, when time should prompt them, to make road again upon Rome; but as, at this moment, Sicinius and Brutus approached them, Coriolanus cried, "Behold! these are the tribunes of the people, the tongues of the common mouth;" and he told Lartius how he despised them. "Pass no further!" said Sicinius, warningly, with outstretched hand. "Ha! what is that?" asked Coriolanus, enraged at the interference. "It will be dangerous to go on; no further," said the tribune.

Here the senators and patricians who stood near bid the tribunes give way, saying that Coriolanus should go to the market-place. "The people are incensed against him," cried Brutus; and Sicinius bid them stop or all would be in a broil. Coriolanus boldly charged the tribunes with having set the people on. "It is a purposed thing, and grows by plot, to curb the will of the nobility!" he cried. To this Brutus responded in like bitter terms, and anger grew on each side, until, with taunts and reproaches and galling truths, Coriolanus condemned the rabble for their base hatred of what was worthy in the commonwealth, and called upon those who preferred a noble life to a long one, to pluck out the multitudinous tongue, and let them not lick the sweet which was their poison. Upon hearing this fearless speech, the tribunes cried "Enough," and charged Coriolanus

with being a traitor, who, they said, should answer as traitors do; and they summoned the ædiles, their officers, and bid them apprehend him. Sicinius sent Brutus to call the people, and presently he returned with a rabble of citizens, crying, "Down with him! down with him!" The senators called in their turn for weapons, and then arose a babble of voices and clash of arms, which was stilled at last by Brutus, who shouted to the ædiles to lay hands upon Coriolanus and cast him from the Tarpeian rock. "No; I'll die here!" said the warrior, drawing his sword; and he defied those who had ever beheld him fighting in the field to cross swords with him now.

Again there arose a confusion of voices and blows, during which the tribunes and their party were beaten back, and the friends of Coriolanus urged him to retreat to his house or all would be naught in Rome. On fair ground, the warrior said he could beat forty of them; but finally the prudent counsel of the elders prevailed, and Coriolanus parted for his home. When he had gone, one of the patricians said that he had marred his own fortune; but Menenius, his friend, said that his nature was too noble, for he would not flatter Neptune for his trident. "His heart's in his mouth," quoth he; "what his breast forges that his tongue must vent; and, being angry, he forgets that ever he heard the name of death."

But now Brutus and Sicinius, with a great rabble of citizens, came up, and Sicinius cried out, "Where is the viper that would depopulate the city, and

be every man himself?" Menenius tried to ease their anger by fair words, but they vowed that Coriolanus should be thrown from the Tarpeian rock; and because the old lord spoke of him as consul, the citizens burst forth in loud protest; and Sicinius said it was decreed he should die that same night.

Thus the argument was bandied between the warrior's friends and enemies until the tribunes declared they would hear no more, and they bid the people pursue him to his house; but Menenius prayed leave to go to him, saying that he would bring him in peace to them, where he should answer by a lawful form to his utmost peril. This plan was accepted by the people, and they laid down their weapons, agreeing to meet in the market-place, where, said they to Menenius, if he brought not Coriolanus they would proceed as they had at first declared.

The noble soldier was very loath, even for the sake of Rome, to bend to the mob; and at first he said they might pile ten hills on the Tarpeian rock, that the precipitation might stretch down below the beam of his sight, yet he would still be as he was towards them. But his mother said she would he had put his power well on, ere he had worn it out; and she pleaded so wisely and temperately, showing him how he ought to dissemble with his nature when his fortune and his friends, being at stake, required he should, in honour, do so, that in the end she prevailed, and he consented to go

to the people in the market-place and to use the wise counsel she gave him in framing his politic speech to them.

In the mean time Brutus and Sicinius, who desired nothing so much as the downfall of Coriolanus, though they concealed their purpose with fair words, had arranged with certain citizens that when he appeared before them they should cry for a fine, or banishment, or death, as the chance might happen; and they bid them straight put Coriolanus into choler, for he had been used ever to conquer, and, being chafed, he could not be reined again to temperance, but would speak what was in his heart, and through this they might break his neck.

When Coriolanus, accompanied by the senators and patricians, came into the market-place, he was confronted by the tribunes, the ædiles, and a host of the citizens, and Sicinius at once demanded of him if he would submit to the people's voices, acknowledge their officers, and be content to suffer lawful censure for such faults as were proved upon him. Coriolanus said he was content, and Menenius, ever ready with his support, seconded the warrior's voice and touched upon his wounds and warlike services.

Coriolanus then with some haughtiness asked why it was that, being passed for consul, he was now so dishonoured. Sicinius charged him with an attempt to assume tyrannical power, for which he called him traitor. "How! traitor?" exclaimed

the stout soldier, in instant rage; and, though his friends strove to soothe him and bate his anger, he roared forth a defiance at Sicinius, saying he lied and calling him an injurious tribune. "Mark you this, people?" cried Sicinius, for it was the cue he had hoped for; and the citizens shouted out with one voice, "To the rock! to the rock!" Sicinius, however, bid them keep peace, and he said that though what Coriolanus had done and uttered deserved the extremest death, yet in the name of the people and in the power of the tribunes he would pronounce a judgment of banishment against him, even from that instant never more to enter the gates of Rome. The citizens approved of this with a great shout; and though the friends of Coriolanus tried to stem the tide of their anger with soft speeches, yet the mob insisted on his banishment, and he staightway passed on to the gates of the city.

Hither the banished warrior was followed by his mother and his wife, with a score of friends who came to take a sad farewell of him. He bid the weeping Volumnia resume that spirit when she was wont to say, if she had been the wife of Hercules she would have done six of his labours for him; and he took a mournful leave of old Menenius and of Cominius, saying he would do well yet. Then, bidding all be of good cheer, for he would let them hear from him wherever he might be, he went forth into the open land.

Now it happened that the force which the Vol-

cians had been secretly gathering for a fresh attack against Rome was at this time complete; and when they heard of the banishment of their most dreaded foe, they rejoiced much at their good fortune, and made preparations to set out immediately upon the conquest.

Again Tullus Aufidius was chosen to lead the Volcian armies, and on the night before his departure he gave a great banquet at his house in Antium, where all the chief lords of the land attended. But before the meal was well begun, a stranger, muffled and unkempt, presented himself at the door and asked admittance. The servants tried to drive away this intruder who interrupted their duties; but he was stronger than they and would not budge, but beat them roundly when they laid hands on him.

At last they went to Aufidius with their complaints, and he came forth into the hall, much vexed that his feast should thus be interrupted. "Where is this fellow?" he asked; and when he saw the man he questioned whence he came, what he would have, and what his name was. The stranger was silent to all these questions, and until Aufidius grew more peremptory would say nothing. But at last he took the hood from his head and face, and asked if Aufidius knew him not. "What is thy name?" said Aufidius, failing to recognize him. "A name unmusical to Volcian ears," quoth the stranger. Then Aufidius again bid him to speak his name, for, said he, "Thou

hast a grim appearance, and thy face bears a command in it; and, though thy tackle's torn, thou showest a noble vessel." Then, at last, the stranger said, "My name is Caius Marcius, who hath done to thee particularly, and to all the Volces, great hurt and mischief; thereto witness my surname, Coriolanus." And he told Aufidius how all his painful service, extreme dangers, and drops of blood shed for his thankless country had been requited with nothing save that surname; and he said that this extremity it was which had brought him to Aufidius's hearth; not in hope to save his life, for if he had feared death he would have avoided of all men Aufidius, but in mere spite to be full quit of all his banishers. Wherefore he prayed the Volcian captain to make his misery serve his turn and so to use him that his revengeful services might prove as benefits to the Volcians; for, he said, he would fight against his cankered country with the spleen of all the under-fiends. But if Aufidius dared not to do this, then Coriolanus was weary of living longer, and presented his throat, which not to cut would show his ancient enemy but a fool.

"O Marcius, Marcius," cried Aufidius, taking his hands, "each word thou hast spoken hath weeded a root of ancient envy from my heart!" And he twined his arms about the body of Coriolanus, against which he said his spear of grained ash had an hundred times broken and scarred the moon with splinters. Then he bid the exile go in to

the feast and take the friendly senators by the hands who were now there taking their leaves of him, for he said he was prepared to make war against the Roman territories, though not against Rome itself. He offered, moreover, that if Coriolanus would have the leading of his own revenges, he might take one half of his commission and himself decide whether to knock against the gates of Rome or rudely visit them in parts remote to frighten, before destroying, them.

Within the banqueting-room Coriolanus was received by the noble Volcians with much honour and set at the upper end of the table, where they stood bareheaded before him. They promptly decided that he should lead one half of their forces against the Roman territories, and Coriolanus agreed to go on the morrow, saying he would mow down whatever opposed him.

In the mean time all was peaceful in Rome, and the tribunes were rejoiced at the happy issue of their banishment of Coriolanus, for the citizens blessed them and they grew mightily in the public esteem.

But in the midst of their security there one day crept forth a rumour from a slave who had been made prisoner that the Volces with two several powers had entered in the Roman territories and with the deepest malice destroyed all that lay in their path. The tribunes would not believe this, and ordered that the slave should be whipped who uttered it; but presently a messenger arrived who

repeated the news, and added that Marcius was joined with Aufidius in the attack. Then, at last, came another messenger, bidding Sicinius and Brutus to the senate, for a fearful army, he reported, raged upon the Roman territories.

The senators and patricians who had been friendly to Coriolanus now reproached and blamed the unhappy tribunes, who speedily became as hated as they had before been popular. The citizens one and all vowed that it was against their will that Coriolanus was banished, and blamed the danger which menaced Rome upon the two tribunes. Brutus and Sicinius tried to avert their anger by denying the rumours and bidding the people go peacefully home and show no sign of fear; but for all that, they themselves trembled at the tidings, and Brutus said he would that half his wealth could buy the news for a lie.

The Volcian forces, led by Coriolanus and Aufidius, had come triumphantly onward through the Roman territories, and presently they encamped but a small distance from the gates of the city itself. This greatly alarmed the populace, and they clamoured for some one to go forth and plead with Coriolanus for their safety. The old pitiless cries which had banished their greatest soldier were now turned to prayers for his mercy, and Cominius, as his friend and fellow-soldier, was sent forth to beg terms of peace for his ungrateful city.

But Coriolanus had been wounded in his pride and in his love of Rome too deeply to give over

his revenge upon such a request. He turned away from the arguments and prayers of Cominius, saying even of his dear friends, that he could not stay to pick them out in a pile of noisome chaff. The old consul thus came back to Rome crest-fallen and despairing, and the tribunes, who had by this time abandoned their defiant bearing towards the patricians and were ready to supplicate even Coriolanus, called upon Menenius to go out and make trial what his love could do for Rome.

With much reluctance this old lord at last consented to go, yet he said that Coriolanus having bit his lip and hummed at good Cominius much disheartened him in the attempt; but in order to take the general in a favourable mood he meant to wait until he had dined before approaching him.

But notwithstanding this, Cominius told the tribunes after Menenius had departed, that Coriolanus would never hear him, for the warrior was full of anger against Rome, and his injury was gaoler to his pity. The old consul added that he thought their only hope lay in inducing the noble mother and the wife of the exiled general to solicit him for mercy to his country.

When Menenius reached the advanced post of the Volcian camp and asked an audience with Coriolanus he was told that he could not enter, and though he gave his name, which he thought the guard must know, and told of his friendship with Coriolanus, he was repeatedly denied an entrance, and would have been turned away had

not Coriolanus and Aufidius happened at that time to be going their rounds and encountered him striving with the guard. "What's the matter?" asked Coriolanus. Menenius, with a look of triumph towards the guard, appealed to the great soldier in the name of their long-enduring friendship. "I was hardly moved to come to thee," he said, "but being assured none but myself could move thee, I have been blown out of the gates with sighs, and conjure thee to pardon Rome. The good gods assuage thy wrath and turn the dregs of it upon this varlet here, who like a block hath denied my access to thee."

Coriolanus looked sternly at his old friend through all his speech, and at its end said, harshly, "Away!" Menenius was astonished and wounded at such treatment, but the Volcian guard were gleeful to see it. Coriolanus gravely said that he knew not wife, mother, or child, and that though Menenius and he had once been familiar, yet ingrate forgetfulness had poisoned their friendship, and he bid the old lord be gone. His ears were closed against his suit, he said, more firmly than the Roman gates against the Volcian force.

Thus treated and cast out, Menenius went back to Rome, where he found that, in the mean time, Virgilia and Volumnia with Marcius, the young son of Coriolanus, had gone on a mission like to his. But he foretold their ill-success to the tribunes, and was in all things certain that the throats of the citizens were doomed, for he said there was no

more mercy in Coriolanus than there is milk in a male tiger, and this the poor city would speedily find, and he charged that the tribunes were alone to blame for it.

But, in the Volcian camp, Coriolanus, beginning to fear that his firmness might give way to such moving petitions for forgiveness, hastened to make preparations for the attack, and he told Aufidius that on the morrow he would set down his host before the walls of Rome; bidding him, at the same time, report to the Volcian lords with what truth to them he had borne this business. "Only their ends you have respected," said Aufidius, who, though he was growing secretly jealous of the sway of Coriolanus with the Volcian forces, yet acknowledged that the Roman warrior had stopped his ears against the general suit of Rome, and never admitted a private whisper even from such friends as thought themselves sure of him. "This last old man," said Coriolanus, "whom, with a cracked heart, I have sent to Rome, loved me above the measure of a father. It was their last refuge to send him, but I will not lend ear hereafter to fresh embassies and suits either from the state or from private friends."

Just as Coriolanus had uttered these words a shout arose in the camp, and, looking up, to see what occasioned it, he cried, "Shall I be tempted to infringe my vow in the same time it is made?" for there before him were his wife, his mother, and his son. "Out, affection, all bond and privilege

of nature break!" he exclaimed; but even these stout-hearted thoughts could not hold him to his stern purpose, for he felt himself melt, and knew he was not of stronger earth than others. "My lord and husband!" said Virgilia, with a supplicating voice; and he tried to reply harshly, but could only bring himself to say, "These eyes are not the same I wore in Rome;" yet in an instant his heart overcame his colder mood, and he declared that, like a dull actor he had forgot his part and he was out, even to a full disgrace. "Best of my flesh, forgive my tyranny!" he said to his wife; yet he bid her not therefore ask for forgiveness for the Romans, but tenderly embraced her and begged a kiss as long as his exile and sweet as his revenge.

Then he turned affectionately to Volumnia, and blamed himself for prating, while the most noble mother in the world stood by unsaluted; and he sank his knee to earth before Volumnia, showing more impression of deep duty, he said, than common sons are wont to do. She bid him stand up blessed, and in her turn knelt before him; but this he forbid in some words of filial love, whereupon she pointed to his son, a poor epitome which might in turn come to show like himself. Coriolanus greeted young Marcius with tenderness, and called upon the god of soldiers to inform him with noble thoughts. The boy knelt to his brave father, and Volumnia, embracing this favourable moment, told Coriolanus that his son, his wife, and herself had come as suitors for mercy to Rome. She

said for herself, she purposed not to wait on fortune till the wars were ended, for if he would not show a noble grace both to his family and to his country, he must march to the assault of Rome over his mother's body. To this his wife added her voice; and Coriolanus was so moved by their pleading that he would have gone away from them; but Volumnia detained him, saying that he need not destroy the Volces to save the Romans, for she desired them reconciled; and so passionately did she plead her cause and so steadfastly kneel with the others before him, that at last the filial cry broke from him, "O mother, mother!" and he took her by both hands, saying, "What have you done? You have won a happy victory to Rome; but for your son, believe it, most dangerously you have prevailed with him, if not most fatally." And he turned to Aufidius, who still stood by, and asked, "Now, good Aufidius, were you in my stead, would you have heard a mother less, or granted less?" The Volcian declared he was greatly moved; but he saw how mercy and honour were at difference in Coriolanus, and resolved to make the Roman's error work to his own advantage. Coriolanus then led the ladies and his son to his tent, whence he said they should bear back to Rome a witness better than words; and, lastly, he vowed that they deserved to have a temple built to them, for all the swords in Italy could not have won this peace.

During all this time, in Rome, the tribunes

were in great danger of their lives from the fickle mob, who now turned fiercely upon them for having exiled Coriolanus; but when a messenger came with tidings that the ladies had prevailed, that the Volcians were dislodged and Coriolanus gone, there was a sudden change from sorrow to rejoicing, and instantly the trumpets sounded, the hautboys were blown, drums were beaten, and happy shouts arose throughout the city. Sicinius first blessed the gods for their tidings and next gave the messenger his thanks, and so went off to greet the ladies as they returned from the Volcian camp. Senators, patricians, and throngs of citizens were abroad, and as the noble wife and mother of Coriolanus entered the gates of Rome they were saluted with grateful shouts of welcome, for they had indeed saved their country from destruction.

In the mean time the Volcian forces had been led back to Antium by Aufidius and Coriolanus, and the former had secretly sent a paper to the lords of the city accusing Coriolanus of treachery towards the Volces because he had failed to overthrow Rome when it was in his power to do so. Aufidius had attached to his cause many conspirators among the citizens of Antium, and these were sworn to slay Coriolanus, both because of his ingratitude to his fellow-leader, who had befriended him at his need, and of his disloyalty to the Volcian states.

When, therefore, Coriolanus entered the city, with drums beating and colours flying, and ad-

dressed the lords, saying he was returned their soldier, no more infected with his own country's love than when he parted from them, but still subsisting under their great command; and when he told the lords that he had made peace, with no less honour to the Antiates than shame to Rome, then Aufidius, stepping forth in his true guise, called upon the lords not to read the treaty, but to tell the traitor that he had abused their powers in the highest degree.

"Traitor?" questioned Coriolanus, astonished at the charge from one whom he deemed his friend. "Ay, traitor, Marcius!" cried Aufidius. "Marcius?" asked Coriolanus, surprised to be so addressed. "Ay, Marcius,—Caius Marcius," said Aufidius. "Dost thou think I'll grace thee with that robbery, thy stolen name, Coriolanus?" Then he accused the great soldier, who was ever his vanquisher in arms, of perfidiously betraying the business of the lords of the Volcian state and giving up for a few tears their city—for so he called it—of Rome.

Coriolanus looked from his noble height of manhood with contempt upon this mean and jealous captain. He scornfully dismissed him with a few burning words. But Aufidius was in the midst of his countrymen, and Coriolanus, since he had come off so poorly in his contest for Rome, was scarce trusted by his old enemies. So that, when several turbulent spirits began to cry for his life, bidding the mob tear him to pieces,—this one

saying he had killed his son, and that his daughter or his father,—there was an immediate outburst of violence, and straightway the people one and all began to cry, "Kill! kill!" and Aufidius and his fellow-conspirators drew their swords and slew Coriolanus without mercy.

As the great soldier fell, Aufidius mounted upon his body, bidding the lords hear him speak. "O Tullus," cried the lords, "thou hast done a deed whereat valour will weep." But Aufidius defended his act, and said if they would call him to their senate he would deliver himself up to endure their severest censure.

Then the great lords of the city, who valued Coriolanus truly for his exalted worth and unsullied honour, commanded that his body be borne from the place where it had fallen, so that he might be properly mourned: for, said they, it was the most noble corse that ever herald did follow to its urn. And Aufidius, stricken with sorrow for his impetuous deed, bid those of the chiefest soldiers take the warrior up, and with them, he bore Coriolanus through the city, where, though he had widowed and unchilded many a one, yet Aufidius vowed he should ever have a noble memory.

JULIUS CÆSAR.

THE liberties of Rome, which had long been a republic, were in danger of being overthrown by Julius Cæsar, who had not only conquered the enemies of his country abroad, but had overcome all opposition to his will at home, and as he was powerful both in the loyalty of his soldiers and in his popularity with the people, he was like to become king when he would.

As he went, on the feast of the Lupercalia, to see the courses run by Mark Antony and other young patricians, there mingled with his train of followers a certain soothsayer, who in the midst of the shouts of merriment which attended the games warned Cæsar, in a grave voice, to beware the Ides of March, a period of time which began with the next day. Upon calling the man forth and hearing his words again, Cæsar said he was a dreamer, and bid his company pass on; but the warning sank into the dictator's heart, for he was, like all his countrymen, of a superstitious nature and paid careful heed to signs and omens.

Of the company which followed Cæsar were two Roman lords, who watched with sad hearts

the encroachment of the dictator's power upon the liberties of Rome. These were Brutus, whose ancestor of the same name had driven the tyrant Tarquin, the last king of Rome, from his throne, and Cassius, a patriot of Brutus's own rank, who had, like him, shared Cæsar's fortunes in war, but who could not countenance his ambition to rule in his native city.

As these two talked together apart, they both had in mind the danger which menaced Rome, but neither dared first mention it, so perilous was it to whisper aught against Cæsar. But by indirect approaches they finally told each other their thoughts; and, finding that they were at one in a resolve against Cæsar's assumption of kingship, they entered into an agreement to prevent it if they could.

But as they spoke thus they were thrice interrupted by the shouts of the populace who thronged around Cæsar in another street a short distance from where they stood; and when the games which he had come forth to view were ended, Brutus and Cassius called a friend, named Casca, from the dictator's train, and asked him to tell them what had chanced to cause the shouts of the people.

This blunt gentleman said that a crown had been offered Cæsar at three different times by Mark Antony, and that each time Cæsar had put it away from him; but finally, when he had refused it the last time and the rabble hooted and clapped their hands and threw up their sweaty nightcaps,

Cæsar was almost choked by having to give it over as his crafty policy dictated; and he fell into a swoon there in the market-place, and foamed at the mouth and was speechless. Casca further said that before Cæsar fell down he had perceived the common herd was glad he refused the crown, and he opened his doublet and offered them his throat to cut, but at that moment he swooned; and when he came to, his first words were that if he had done anything amiss he desired their worships to think it was due to his infirmity.

All this pretended submission of Cæsar to the will of the mob increased the alarm of Brutus and Cassius not a little, and when they had parted from Casca, they agreed to meet the next day for another conference.

On that same night there came a storm of thunder and lightning to Rome so full of terrors that Casca, who met Cicero in the street, said to him that either there was a civil strife in heaven or else the world, too saucy with the gods, incensed them to send destruction; for he had seen the tempest dropping fire; and met a common slave holding up his left hand, which flamed and burned like twenty torches, yet his hand remained unscorched. Many other awful portents he had encountered; but Cicero wisely said that men may construe such things clean from their purpose; and he asked if Cæsar went to the Capitol on the morrow? Casca answered that he did; then they bid good-night and parted.

But as Casca turned towards his home Cassius came up with him, who, when Casca spoke of the awful night, made light of it, saying he had walked the streets baring his bosom to the thunder-stone, and presenting himself to the cross-blue lightning. Casca, who was much in fear of the angry elements, asked him why he thus tempted the heavens, for it was man's part to tremble in such times, and Cassius made answer that as a Roman he should show no fear, but if he would consider the true cause why all the dreadful omens were abroad, he would see that heaven had infused them with these spirits to make them instruments of warning against one man, no mightier than themselves in personal action, but grown prodigious and fearful, as these strange eruptions were.

Casca asked if he meant Cæsar; but Cassius was too wary to betray himself till he was sure of Casca's good faith; and this latter now said that the senators intended to establish Cæsar as king on the morrow, who should reign in every Roman dominion save Italy. "I know where I will wear this dagger then," said Cassius, threatening thus to take his own life; and when Casca said that so every bondsman bears in his own hand the power to cancel his captivity, Cassius was moved to speak bolder words. "And why should Cæsar be a tyrant?" he asked. "I know he would not be a wolf but that he sees the Romans are but sheep!" and he muttered how Rome was become trash, rubbish, and offal when it served for the base

matter to illuminate so vile a thing as Cæsar. Then remembering himself he said, "But, O grief! where hast thou led me? I perhaps speak this before a willing bondsman!" Casca was quick to say that he was no fleering tell-tale, but he gave Cassius his hand as a pledge of his sincerity, and said he would set his foot as far as went the farthest in any faction for the redress of all these griefs.

Hereupon Cassius said it was a bargain made, and he revealed to Casca how he had already moved some of the noblest-minded Romans to undergo with him an enterprise of honourable-dangerous consequence. At that moment, he said, they stayed for him in Pompey's porch; and on such a fearful night there was no stir in the streets, and the complexion of the element was like in favor to the work in hand, most bloody, fiery, and terrible. Then, as they were about to part, Cinna, one of Cassius's friends in the conspiracy, came up in haste to find him; and when they had saluted, and Cassius had told him that Casca agreed to take part with them in their attempt, he gave Cinna certain papers addressed to Brutus, one of which he was to lay in his chair, one to throw in at his window, and one to set up with wax upon the statue of old Brutus. All this done, he was to repair to Pompey's porch, and there join the rest of his fellow-patriots.

But instead of parting from Casca, Cassius asked him, when Cinna was gone, to go with him to see Brutus at his house; for, he said, three

parts of Brutus were already theirs, and the man entire must yield upon the next encounter. To this Casca gladly consented, and they hastened onward, for it was after midnight.

Now, Brutus had also suffered through this tempestuous night with evil dreams and wakefulness, and towards morning he arose and went to his orchard, pondering without rest upon Cæsar's menace to Rome, and how he should be turned from his ambitious courses. He had no personal cause to spurn at him, but for the general good he saw that the only remedy lay in Cæsar's death. Should he be crowned, he feared majesty would change his nature, for it is the bright day that brings forth the adder, and the abuse of greatness is when it disjoins remorse from power.

Brooding thus, he paced back and forth among his orchard trees, while Lucius, his page, went to light a taper in his study. When the boy came back he brought with him a paper which he had found in the window, and his master, taking this, dismissed him again to bed. It still lightened so vividly that Brutus could read the paper by the flashes, and in it he found these words: "Brutus, thou sleepest; awake, and see thyself. Shall Rome——? Speak, strike, redress!" He had before received such missives, and he knew well that the blank meant: "Shall Rome stand under one man's awe?" and he thought within himself how his ancestors had driven the Tarquin from the streets of Rome when he was called a king,

and now he resolved that if redress would follow he would do all that duty called on him to do.

At this favourable moment a knock came upon the gate, and when it was opened Cassius entered, accompanied by all his fellow-conspirators with hats drawn down about their ears and their faces buried in their cloaks.

"I think we are too bold upon your rest," said Cassius, in excuse for the early hour of the visit. But Brutus said he had been awake all night; then he turned towards the muffled group, and asked if he knew these men. "Yes, every man of them," said Cassius; and he pointed out Trebonius, and Decius Brutus, and Casca, and Cinna, and Metellus Cimber, each of whom in turn Brutus welcomed. Then Cassius drew Brutus apart, while the rest whispered together, and presently they came back to the group, when Brutus took their hands all over again one by one, in sign that he had joined in their undertaking. Cassius proposed that they should now swear to their resolution, but Brutus was against an oath; for, he said, in so high an enterprise what other oath than honesty engaged to honesty was needed,—when every drop of blood that every Roman bore were guilty of a several bastardy if he broke the smallest particle of his promise?

Certain of the conspirators were anxious that Mark Antony and Cæsar should fall together; but the wise and gentle Brutus said that their course would seem too bloody to cut the head off and

then hack the limbs, and he bid them be sacrificers but not butchers. "We'll stand up against the spirit of Cæsar," he said; "and in the spirit of men there is no blood. O that we could come by Cæsar's spirit and not dismember Cæsar! But, alas, Cæsar must bleed for it!" And he pleaded with his gentle friends to kill him boldly, but not wrathfully.

As he spoke thus the clock struck three, and because the dawn approached it became time to part; but, before they left, Cassius said Cæsar was grown superstitious of late, and it was doubtful if he would go forth that day, after the unaccustomed terrors of the night. Decius bid them never to fear that, for, even if Cæsar were so resolved, he could o'ersway him; and Cassius told all of those present to be at Cæsar's house at the eighth hour to fetch him to the Capitol.

Then the group parted each his several way; and Brutus, coming back alone to the orchard, found his boy asleep. "Thou hast no figures nor no fantasies which busy care draws in the brains of men," he mused, looking tenderly upon the slumbering lad; but, hearing a step at his side, he turned, and was surprised to find Portia, his wife, come forth thus over-early from her bed. "Portia," he chided, "what mean you? Wherefore rise you now? It is not for your health thus to commit your weak condition to the raw-cold morning." But the lady had noted her husband's troubled mind and restless actions, and she was

alarmed lest he should be ill or suffering, and she implored him to make her a confidante in his griefs. He said he was not well in health. But this would not satisfy Portia, for she asked why then he exposed himself to the humours of the dank morning; and again she urged him to tell her what was in his heart and what men had that night resorted to him, for she had seen, she said, some six or seven who hid their faces even from darkness. "I grant I am a woman," quoth she, "but withal a woman that lord Brutus took to wife." And further to show her constancy, she said, she had given herself a voluntary wound in her thigh. "O ye gods," murmured Brutus, "render me worthy of this noble wife!" But just at this moment there came a knocking at the gate, and he bid her go in awhile, saying that by and by her bosom should partake the secrets of his heart.

Ligarius now came in, who had been sent to Brutus by Metellus to be won over to their cause; and, as it approached the hour when the conspirators were to meet at Cæsar's palace, Brutus said he would unfold the plot to him as they went thither.

Cæsar had slept no better than his fellow-Romans through that monstrous night. His wife, Calphurnia, cried out thrice in her slumber, "Help, ho! They murder Cæsar!" And so much was the dictator himself vexed with the strange portents which had appeared, that he sent a servant to the priests, bidding them do present sacrifice and give him their opinions of success.

When Calphurnia arose, so affrighted was she by her dreams and by the storm, that she said Cæsar should not stir forth of his house that day. "Cæsar shall forth," said he. "The things that threaten me look only on my back." But his wife had been told by a servant of the horrid sights seen by the watch: how a lioness had whelped in the streets, graves yawned, fiery warriors fought upon the clouds in ranks and squadrons that drizzled blood upon the Capitol, horses neighed and dying men groaned, while ghosts shrieked about the streets. All this had so alarmed her that she pleaded with Cæsar not to go forth. "Cowards die many times before their deaths; the valiant never taste of death but once," was the bold answer. But when the servant came back from the augurers and told Cæsar that they would not have him stir forth that day, for upon plucking out the entrails of an offering, they could find no heart, he began himself to fear that the gods were against him and faltered in his determination. Seeing him thus irresolute, Calphurnia besought him anew to stay at home, suggesting that Mark Antony should be sent to the senate-house to say that Cæsar was not well that day; and this appearing good, the dictator declared it should be so, and for his wife's humour he would stay at home.

But, as if fate had ordered it so, at this moment Decius arrived at Cæsar's house crying a good-morrow, and saying he had come to fetch him to the senate-house. Cæsar said he had come in

very happy time to bear his greeting to the senators and tell them he would not come that day. "Say he is sick," said Calphurnia; but the mighty soldier would not have excuses made for him, and bid Decius go tell the gray-beards simply that he would not come. Decius asked for some cause, lest he should be laughed at when he told them so; but Cæsar replied only, that the cause was in his will, and, briefly, he would not go. This, he said, was enough to satisfy the senate; but for Decius's private satisfaction he told him the true cause, which was, among other omens, that Calphurnia had dreamed she saw her husband's statue run pure blood at a hundred spouts, to which many lusty Romans came smiling, and did bathe their hands in it.

Decius craftily said that they had interpreted the dream amiss, for it was indeed a fair and fortunate vision. "Your statue spouting blood in many pipes," quoth he, "signifies that great Rome shall suck reviving blood from you, and that great men shall press for tinctures, stains, relics, and cognizance." Cæsar thought this a just interpretation, and Decius followed up his advantage by telling him that the senate meant that day to give a crown to mighty Cæsar; but he declared that if he sent them word Cæsar would not come, they might change their minds. "Besides," he continued, "it were a mock apt to be rendered, for some one to say, 'Break up the senate till another time, when Cæsar's wife shall meet with

better dreams.'" Then he asked pardon, for he said he spoke out of love for Cæsar, who, seeing the humour of it, bid his wife mark how foolish her fears seemed now, and he vowed he was ashamed that he had yielded to them. "Give me my robe, for I will go," he cried; and he was about to set out, when the rest of the conspirators, his friends, came up to his house, and presently Mark Antony as well, and all these Cæsar invited within to taste some wine with him, saying that he would straightway go with them to the senate-house.

As Cæsar and his friends, with a host more, approached the Capitol, the same soothsayer who had before accosted him now crossed his path, and Cæsar, in mockery of his warnings, said to him, "The ides of March are come." "Ay, Cæsar," was the answer, "but not gone."

The proud dictator took no further heed of the fellow, but straightway entered the Capitol, followed by his friends and attendants. All the senators arose to greet him as he came in, and there was much clamour of welcome; but in the midst of it Popilius, who was not in the plot against Cæsar, whispered to Cassius, "I wish your enterprise to-day may thrive;" and when Popilius next went up and spoke with Cæsar, the conspirators were much alarmed, for they thought some one had betrayed them. But the keener eyes of Brutus saw Popilius smile, and noted that Cæsar did not change, and he counselled patience.

In the mean time Trebonius had drawn Mark Antony aside, as he had been directed to do, and presently Metellus Cimber went up to prefer his suit to Cæsar. The rest pressed near to second him, and Cinna whispered Casca to remember that he was to be the first to rear his hand. "What is now amiss that Cæsar and his senate must redress," asked the dictator? "Most high, most mighty, and most puissant Cæsar," prayed Metellus Cimber, "I throw before thy seat an humble heart." Cæsar resented such couchings and lowly courtesies in one of his own station, and he upbraided Metellus for this base spaniel-fawning; but he would not grant his suit, for he said Metellus's brother was banished by decree. Brutus professed to kiss Cæsar's hand, but not in flattery, desiring that Publius Cimber might have an immediate freedom of repeal; and Cassius also pleaded for his enfranchisement. Cæsar replied that he was constant as the northern star to his first purpose of banishment, whereupon Cinna cried out upon him, and Decius tried to make his protest heard above the din of voices. To these Cæsar said, "Doth not Brutus bootless kneel?" and he would not budge from his firm resolve. Casca then seized quickly upon this refusal as an excuse for his attack, and crying, "Speak, hands, for me," he stabbed Cæsar in the neck, who, catching at Casca's arm, was stabbed by several other of the conspirators, and finally by Brutus. "*Et tu, Brute?* Then fall,

Cæsar," said the great soldier, for he felt that if Brutus, whom he so much loved and respected, could desire his death, it was time for him to die.

Then arose a great confusion in the senate-house. The senators retired in affright, not knowing what the conspirators intended to do, and Cinna led on his friends to cry, "Liberty! Freedom! Tyranny is dead!" and they ran out shouting this about the streets. Brutus, with his wonted wisdom, counselled moderation, and bid the people and senators to be not afraid nor to fly, for ambition's debt was paid, and no harm was intended to any Roman else.

Then came in the tribunes saying that Mark Antony had fled to his house amazed, and that men, wives, and children stared, cried out, and ran as if it were doomsday. This did not check the conspirators from going forth, and led by Brutus, they were about to start for the market-place, waving their red weapons over their heads and crying, "Peace, Freedom, and Liberty," when a messenger from Antony came in, who said his master bid him kneel to Brutus and say that, if he would vouchsafe that Antony might safely come to him and learn the cause of Cæsar's death, he would not love Cæsar dead so well as Brutus living, but would follow the fortunes of noble Brutus with all true faith. Brutus replied that if Antony would come thither he should b satisfied, and, by his honour, depart untouched.

Presently Mark Antony himself arrived, and was

welcomed by Brutus; but on seeing the body of Cæsar he could not refrain from some sad lamentations. "O mighty Cæsar," he murmured, "dost thou lie so low? Are all thy conquests, glories, triumphs, spoils, shrunk to this little measure?" Then he turned to the conspirators and said he knew not what they intended, or who else must be let blood, but if he himself, there was no hour so fit as Cæsar's death-hour. Brutus told him with friendly pity to beg not his death from them, for though their hands seemed bloody and cruel yet their hearts were full of pity for the general wrong of Rome. Antony said he doubted not of their wisdom, and he took each man's bloody hand in sign of amity, but he felt that his credit stood on slippery ground, for they must think him either a coward or a flatterer.

Again his love for Cæsar overcame him, and he cried, "That I did love thee, Cæsar, O, 'tis true; if then thy spirit look upon me now, shall it not grieve thee to see thy Antony making his peace, shaking the bloody fingers of thy foes?" And in this strain he continued until the fiery Cassius warned him what he spoke, and Antony asked for pardon, for he said he took their hands meaning to be true to them, but was swayed from the point by looking down on Cæsar.

He asked then for reasons why Cæsar was dangerous, and Brutus said that were Antony the son of Cæsar himself he would be satisfied when he heard them. This, said Antony, was what he

sought; and he asked, moreover, that he might produce Cæsar's body in the market-place and speak as his friend on the funeral. Brutus consented to this; but Cassius, more politic, thought it was unwise, for the people might be too much moved by what he would utter.

Brutus therefore said he would go into the pulpit first and show the reason for Cæsar's death; but still Cassius liked it not; so that Brutus laid certain conditions on Antony, as that he should not blame them, but only speak what good he could devise of Cæsar, and say he did it by their permission; and upon Antony accepting these conditions, Cæsar's body was left to him, and the conspirators passed out.

When Brutus ascended the pulpit in the Forum, all Rome had thronged the streets to hear him speak. "The noble Brutus is ascended. Silence!" cried a host of voices; and presently he began, "Romans, countrymen, and lovers! hear me for my cause, and be silent, that you may hear. If there be any dear friend of Cæsar's in this assembly, to him I say that Brutus's love to Cæsar was no less than his. If then that friend demand why Brutus rose against Cæsar, this is my answer,—not that I loved Cæsar less, but that I loved Rome more." And in this solemn vein he proceeded; asking, at last, who among them was so base that would be a bondman. Thus he appealed alike to their pity and their patriotism, until the crowd was swayed by his burning words to cry out its ap-

proval, and every man of them would have remained steadfast on Brutus's side; but at that same moment came up Mark Antony, with the body of Cæsar; and, after a few words more, Brutus gave place to Antony, saying he would depart; but he asked the citizens, for his sake, to stay there and do grace to Cæsar's corpse. "For Brutus's sake," began Antony, "I am beholden to you." Then one citizen asked another what he said of Brutus, for it were best he spoke no harm of him; and they vowed among themselves that this Cæsar was a tyrant and Rome was blessed in being rid of him.

But being of an inconstant mood, as a mob ever is, the citizens were aroused by Antony's eloquence and innuendoes against the murderers to denounce them as hotly as before they had been in their favour. "I come to bury Cæsar, not to praise him," began Antony. "The evil that men do lives after them; the good is often interred with their bones; so let it be with Cæsar." And he said the noble Brutus had told them Cæsar was ambitious; and, if it were so, it was a grievous fault; and grievously had Cæsar answered it. Yet there, under permission of Brutus and the rest, he had come to speak in Cæsar's funeral,—for Brutus, he said, was an honourable man, and so were they all honourable men.

Thus, placing an equivocal emphasis on these words of respect for Brutus and his friends, and doing so again and again, Antony implied the

reverse of what he said; and so by degrees he brought the crowd, rather through praise than blame, to grow suspicious of Brutus and his fellow-conspirators and to go back to their old loyalty to Cæsar, whom, they began to murmur, had great wrong done him, and they vowed also that there was not a nobler man in Rome than Antony.

Hence, when Antony began again, telling them that but yesterday the word of Cæsar might have stood against the world, but now he lay there with none so poor to do him reverence, and in all things slyly stirring up among them a hatred of Cæsar's foes, they cried aloud against Brutus, and demanded that Antony should read Cæsar's will, though, the more to arouse them, he had said he must not read it. "It is not meet you knew how Cæsar loved you," he said. "You are not wood, nor stones, but men; and, being men, hearing the will of Cæsar will inflame you and make you mad. It is good you know not that you are his heirs, for if you should, O what would come of it!"

This so excited the mob that when Antony bid them make a ring about Cæsar's corpse they did so instantly, and he came down from the pulpit amid the struggling throng, and so maddened them with the tale of Cæsar's murder that they began to call Brutus and his fellows traitors and villains and to run through the streets, crying, "Burn, fire, kill, slay; let not a traitor live!"

Antony feigned to entreat them against mutiny; for, he said, they who had done the deed were

honourable men, and would, no doubt, answer the citizens with good reasons. "I am no orator as Brutus is," he said, with assumed modesty; "but as you know me all, a plain, blunt man that love my friend." But every word he spoke only aroused his hearers the more; and although, till the last, Antony counselled them against violence, they were eager to fly to Brutus's house and burn it and to destroy the conspirators.

At last, Antony read them Cæsar's will, which gave to every Roman citizen seventy-five drachmas, and to the city, for the common pleasure of all, his private arbours and new-planted orchards by the Tiber-side. Hearing this, the crowd burst forth into a shout of rejoicing, and broke away on the instant to revenge Cæsar's death.

Antony, learning from a servant that Octavius Cæsar, a kinsman of the dead dictator, was come post-haste to Rome and was with Lepidus, at Julius Cæsar's house, went thither, well satisfied with the effect his speech had had upon the people. He found Octavius and Lepidus, and with them presently went to his own house, where they set about making a list of those who should die for Cæsar's death,—for, Brutus and his confederates having fled, these three now became triumvirs of Rome and divided the empire between them.

They were informed that Brutus and Cassius were levying forces to do battle against them, and they took measures straightway to raise a power

of their own; for they well knew that being in possession of the government they had the advantage and meant in all things to maintain it.

The army which Brutus and Cassius had drawn to their standards was divided in two, the one part of it being near Sardis, under Brutus, and the other with Cassius at some distance away. Brutus had discovered that one Lucius Pella received bribes from the Sardians, and had condemned him, notwithstanding the interest of Cassius in his behalf. This much incensed Cassius; and when presently the forces joined and he came to Brutus's camp, he boldly charged his fellow-general with doing him wrong. This, Brutus resented, saying he wronged only his enemies; but he told Cassius that he wronged himself to write in such a case. This led to hot words between them, and Brutus accused Cassius of having an itching palm to sell his offices to undeservers. Cassius was now enraged, and he bid Brutus bait him not, for he was a soldier older in practice and abler than he, and he would not brook insult, even from Brutus. "Urge me no more," he said; "have mind upon yourself; tempt me no further." And to this Brutus replied, contemptuously, "Away, slight man!" "O ye gods! ye gods! must I endure all this?" hissed Cassius. But Brutus, too, was far gone in anger, and he would not cease until he had uttered what was in his heart. He had, he said, sent to Cassius for certain sums of gold to pay his legions, which were denied him. "I denied you not," said Cas-

sius. "You did," returned Brutus. Whereupon Cassius told him that the messenger was but a fool who brought back his answer. This was a token of softening on the part of Cassius. But Brutus was much offended, and would not yet make peace. At last, however, Cassius, desiring no permanent rupture with his noble friend, bewailed his misfortune, and tried by pity to do what by threats he could not. Brutus loved Cassius at heart, and they were joined together by the bond of Cæsar's murder, so that little by little he grew mollified, and at last, when Cassius asked it, he gave him his hand, saying, "And my heart too." And upon this the sore was healed between them and they were once more friends.

Then, for the first time, Brutus told Cassius that he was sick with many griefs, for Portia, his wife, was dead. Cassius was sorely moved by this news, and he thought at once of Brutus's forbearance in their quarrel, saying, "How did I escape killing when I crossed you so?"

Portia had died of impatience at her husband's absence and of grief that young Octavius and Mark Antony had made themselves so strong. She had grown distracted with brooding upon these things, and had swallowed fire in the absence of her attendants.

As the two leaders talked together of these things, Titinius and Messala, their fellow-soldiers, came into the tent where they sat, and Brutus told Cassius and them he had received letters that Oc-

tavius and Mark Antony were coming down upon them with a mighty power and were bending their expedition towards Philippi. Upon this they fell to laying plans for opposing the triumvirs, and Brutus suggested a march to Philippi to meet them. He supported his views with many wise reasons, saying that there is a tide in the affairs of men which, taken at the flood, leads on to fortune; but omitted, all the voyage of their life is bound in shallows and in miseries; and that on such a full sea were they now afloat, so that they must take the current when it served or lose their ventures.

Cassius, however, was in favour of remaining where they were, well intrenched amid the hills, rather than venturing to give battle upon the plains; but he gave up to the reasoning of Brutus, and the march was finally ordered.

This done the leaders retired to take a little rest, for the hour was late and they were weary.

When his friends were gone Brutus, also, would have slept, but his cares weighed too heavily upon him for rest, and he called his boy Lucius, who was already slumbering, to summon Varro and Claudius to lie on cushions in his tent, for he was disquieted and needed company. By every means he sought to win sleep, and at last questioned Lucius if he could hold up his heavy lids awhile and touch his instrument a strain or two? This, Lucius willingly did; but presently, in the midst of the air, he fell asleep against his instrument. Brutus tenderly took it from him lest he

should break it, and himself sat down to read beside his dim taper.

He thought how ill the taper burned, and turned to fix it, when his eyes beheld a sight which chilled him to the bone. It was the ghost of Cæsar which came down upon him. "Art thou anything? Art thou some god, some angel, or some devil, that makest my blood cold and my hair to stare?" he cried, and the ghost said, solemnly, "I am thy evil spirit, Brutus." He asked why it had come, and it replied: "To tell thee thou shalt see me at Philippi." Brutus now regained his composure and took heart to mock at the spirit, for he was not certain but that it was a mere figment of his overwrought brain, and as if to prove this, his fear passing away, the ghost vanished. Then he called his attendants to test, by them, if it had been his own fancy or an apparition. They had seen nothing, and he was for the time satisfied.

Octavius and Antony were secretly rejoiced that the others had decided to meet them on the plains of Philippi, for there they would have a much better chance of victory than among the hills of Sardis. When, therefore, the battle began, though it was fought valiantly on either side, the triumvirs from the first were confident, while Brutus and his friends felt omens of ill-succes.

It fell out, however, that the legions which Brutus led overcame those of Octavius, to which they were opposed, while Cassius's command was driven back by Antony and his forces. This led

to a great confusion in the ranks of both armies, so that the men and leaders could scarce tell friend from foe. Cassius sent his friend Titinius to learn whether certain troops were of his faction or the other, but as Titinius was long away and Pindarus reported from the hill above that he saw him enclosed round about with horsemen and taken, Cassius, ever of a hopeless temper, declared that he was a coward to live so long to see his best friend taken before his face. He therefore bid Pindarus fulfil his oath, that, whenever his master should command it, he should take his life. Pindarus poised the sword that had run Cæsar through, and with it slew Cassius, who died thus incontinently on the eve of what might else have proved victory. For Titinius had not been taken by the enemy, but had found friends, and presently he came back full of hope; but seeing Cassius dead, he, also, began to despair; and he took up his friend's sword and killed himself for grief.

When Brutus and his lieutenants found these slain upon the field, they were heart-broken. "Friends," cried Brutus, "I owe more tears to this dead man than you shall see me pay," but he murmured, "I shall find time, Cassius, I shall find time," and, with the rest, he hurried away to the field to try his fortunes in a second fight.

But overwearied as he was, and full of great griefs, Brutus finally retreated before the foe, and at last he and his leaders were driven to a final stronghold, where they sat together upon a rock

steadfast and unvanquished but quieted with thoughts of approaching death. Here Brutus was so oppressed with encompassing evils that he whispered one after another of his friends for the relief which could come only from their swords. Each in turn was distressed by his proposal, for all loved him; but when the cries of alarm gathered and drew near and the end was not far off, this noble Roman, who had vowed never to be taken alive, besought his servant Strato to hold his sword while he ran upon it.

And thus died Brutus, who, said Mark Antony, was the noblest Roman of them all, for all the conspirators, save him only, did what they did in envy of great Cæsar; but he alone, in a general honest thought and common good to all, made one of them. His life was gentle, and the elements so mixed in him that Nature might stand up and say to all the world, "This was a man!" and Octavius declared that, according to his virtue, he should be used with all respect and rites of burial; and directed that during that night his bones should lie in his tent, most like a soldier, ordered honourably.

ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA.

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MARK ANTONY, one of the triumvirs of Rome, the triple pillars of the ancient world, had extended his conquests into the East, and brought Egypt under the Roman rule, so that its queen, Cleopatra, became his vassal; but when, with many precious gifts and costly trappings and in all her radiant beauty, she went by sea to Tarsus to do homage to the great general, he straightway fell in love with this voluptuous queen, and became, in fact, her subject rather than her ruler.

So infatuated was he, indeed, that his officers called his passion a dotage, for, said they, his goodly eyes that once glowed like plated Mars over the files and musters of the war, now bent and turned their devotion upon this tawny face, and his captain's heart, which in the scuffles of great fights had burst the buckles on his breast, had become the bellows to cool a gypsy's lust. Day long he was with her, and her clinging caresses and insidious wiles so took up his thoughts that he would hear no news from Rome, but dismissed

the messengers sent by Cæsar and Lepidus, his fellow-triumvirs, bidding Rome melt into the Tiber and the wide arch of the empire to fall, for here, he said, was his space, and that the nobleness of life was to do as he then did; and, when such a pair as he and Cleopatra were together, they stood up peerless.

So it fared for a little time, but the world is not so wide but that a man's sin may sooner or later find him out, and at last Antony awoke to the gravity of his affairs in Rome. A messenger had come bringing news of wars in Italy, and of the conquests in Asia of Antony's fellow-general, Labienus, who had, with his Parthian force, extended the Roman dominions to the Euphrates, and, the messenger said, his conquering banner shook from Syria to Lydia and to Ionia, lands of the far East.

This pricked Antony's martial pride and touched him with shame at his idle course; but he dismissed the messenger presently and called another, a man from Sicyon, who told him bluntly that Fulvia, his wife, was dead in Sicyon, and handed him a letter bearing further advices.

Upon this Antony sent him away and fell to pondering on these latest tidings. "There's a great spirit gone," he murmured, and thought how he had desired it thus, but that what our contempts hurl from us we often wish to be ours again. She was good, and she was gone; but the hand that shoved her on could now willingly pluck her back; and he resolved that he would break off

from this enchanting queen who had him in her toils, for his idleness did hatch ten thousand harms.

Then he called his officer Enobarbus, and delivered him the contents of his letters, bidding him let the army have notice that he purposed going from thence. Not alone did the death of Fulvia strongly speak to him, but the letters of many friends in Rome petitioned him to set out for home, for Sextus Pompeius had given the dare to Cæsar, and now commanded the empire of the sea, and the slippery people began to throw the dignities of Pompey the great upon his son.

When Antony broached his purpose to Cleopatra she scorned him for his little love, who could thus leave her to go to the married woman, as she slightingly called his wife; he pleaded that the strong necessity of time commanded his services awhile, but that his full heart remained with her. He told her, too, how Rome was menaced without and within, how Pompey made his approaches, and lastly he said that that which most should reconcile her to his going was the death of Fulvia.

The captious queen upon this found a new cause for upbraiding Antony. She asked where were the sacred vials he should fill with water, arguing that if he stood thus untearful at news of his wife's death, he would equally disregard absence from her. "By the fire that quickens Nilus' slime," he swore, "I go from hence thy soldier and servant, making peace or war as thou affectest."

Still she reproached him, striving thus by oppo-

sition to win him the closer to her, for she had told her attendant, Charmian, that the way to lose him was to indulge him. But Antony's purpose was fixed, and telling her again that, even residing there, she still went with him, he called his men together and tore himself from her embraces.

When Antony arrived in Rome he found Cæsar much angered with him, both because of his reported excesses in Egypt, and because of the wars which Antony's wife and brother had made against Rome while he was absent. With secretly aiding in these he boldly charged Antony. But from this blame Antony freed himself, declaring his brother never did urge him in his act, and for his wife, he granted that she did too much disquiet Cæsar, but he said he could not help it, so much incurable were the troubles she stirred up.

Then Cæsar accused him, when rioting in Alexandria, of pocketing his letters and taunting and gibing his messenger out of audience. This also Antony, with manful apologies, explained. He had, he said, newly feasted three kings, and the messenger fell upon him ere he was admitted, but next day he told him the cause of his dismissal, which was as much as to have asked his pardon. But Cæsar persisted, saying Antony had broken the article of his oath: to lend him arms and aid when he required them, for both he had denied. "Neglected, rather," said the patient warrior, "for the summons came when poisoned hours had bound me up from mine own knowledge," and he

said that as nearly as he might he would play the penitent to Cæsar, but his honesty should not make poor his greatness, but the truth was that Fulvia, to have him out of Egypt, made wars in Rome, for which he, the ignorant motive, now asked pardon so far as it befitted his honour to stoop in such a case.

At this all the generals and nobles who heard it murmured their approval, and they presently brought about a reconciliation between the contending triumvirs; yet Cæsar said that it could not be that they should remain in friendship, their conditions so differing in their acts; yet if he knew what hoop would hold them stanch, he would pursue it from edge to edge of the world.

Hereupon Agrippa, a friend of Cæsar, proposed that as Cæsar had a sister by the mother's side, the admired Octavia, and as Mark Antony was now a widower, these two should wed, and so unite the interests of the two great leaders and hold them in perpetual amity. Antony seemed not averse to this, and called on Octavius to speak, who said he would do so when he heard how Antony was touched by it. Antony asked what power was in Agrippa to make it good should he say: Be it so. "The power of Cæsar, and his power with Octavia," replied Octavius; and upon this Antony declared that he would never dream of impediment to this good purpose, and he gave Cæsar his hand, saying that from that hour the heart of brothers should govern in their loves and sway their great

designs. Octavius, in turn, gave Antony his hand, bequeathing him a sister whom no brother did ever love so dearly. "Let her live," he said, "to join our kingdoms and our hearts, and never fly off our loves again."

Thus these two powerful rivals became allies once more, and all their fellow-generals and their friends rejoiced that the breach was closed in amity, for strife between them promised success to Pompey, who now threatened by land and sea; but united he could in no wise hope to match them.

Lepidus, their fellow-triumvir, who had been much concerned to bring them into harmony, now urged them to seek out Pompey; for if they did not do so, he said, this warrior would seek out them at Rome. "Where lies he?" asked Antony. And Cæsar told him at Mount Misenum, and that his strength by land was great and increasing, but by sea he was absolute master. They then resolved that as soon as the nuptials of Antony and Octavia were celebrated they would march with all their force to give Pompey battle. Octavius then invited Antony to go to visit his sister, and they started thither without delay.

In a brief space Antony and Octavia were wedded with all solemnity; and, as was planned, the triumvirs immediately departed for Misenum, where presently they encountered Pompey and his forces.

A parley was held by the contending generals, and, though Pompey had rigged out his navy to

scourge the ingratitude which Rome cast on his noble father, he was now willing to accept certain conditions made him, so that peace might prevail in the Roman domain. These conditions were that he should have the government of Sicily and Sardinia, provided he should rid the sea of the pirates who then infested it, and send certain measures of wheat to Rome.

But Pompey was not a little angered against Mark Antony because he had failed to acknowledge Pompey's services to Fulvia and his brother in their war against Cæsar. Antony had not forgotten this kindness to his house, yet he was loath to wound Cæsar by recalling it; but now he showed himself most grateful, and rendered Pompey liberal thanks, in return for which his late foe gave him his hand in sign of amity.

Thus were all wounds healed between the opposing factions; and the agreement which ended their strife being punctually written and signed, Pompey invited all to go aboard his galley to feast the night out.

With lusty cheer they drank of the wines and ate the feast, until Lepidus grew mellow and served as a butt for Antony's wit; and upon the entrance of music, Enobarbus, linking the hands of all the great generals together, led them in a dance about the table. But while they caroused, Menas, an officer of Pompey's force, drew him aside and asked him if he would be lord of all the world; for he had but to entertain the wish and, though

Menas was accounted poor, he would give him it. Pompey thought he was over-deep in his cups; but Menas declared he had drunk but little. Then Pompey asked him how he would do this, and Menas said, "These three world-sharers, these competitors are in thy vessel. Let me cut the cables, and when we are put off, fall to their throats. All then is thine." So base a design had never entered Pompey's mind; but now that he heard it spoken, he told Menas that hearing it he could not entertain it; but being unknown, he would have found it afterwards well done. He therefore bid his officer desist and drink, and resumed his place at the table among the merry companions of the feast.

But presently Cæsar arose from the table and said he had rather fast four days than drink so much in one; and as their graver business frowned at such levity, he bid good-night to Pompey, then took Antony by the hand and descended to the shore.

This business being well despatched, the triumvirs returned to Rome; and presently Antony and his wife Octavia parted from their friends and went to Athens, whither Antony was called by stress of his conquests under the general Ventidius in the East.

It came about in the course of time that Cleopatra heard of Antony's wedding with Octavia, and she was exceedingly jealous of the young Cæsar's sister, asking every messenger from Rome

for news of her looks, age, and accomplishments. It was most dangerous, as her servants well knew, to thwart this impetuous queen, and those who brought her tidings often suffered severely if these were not to her liking. The messenger who first told her of Antony's marriage so angered her that she beat him roundly up and down her chamber for his pains; and hence when next he brought her news from Rome he answered her questions about Octavia as he knew she would be pleased to have them answered, rather than according to truth. She, in turn, perverted the answers to even worse effects than he intended; so that between them they made Octavia out to be dwarfish and dull of tongue, creeping and without majesty in her gait, thirty in years, round to faultiness in face, and her hair to be red and her forehead over-low.

When she had learned all this, Cleopatra was well satisfied, saying the messenger had seen majesty and should know what he spoke of; and she gave him her purse and graciously dismissed him.

But it was not very long before Antony himself again went to Alexandria, escaping from his wife on some pretext of war, and Cleopatra triumphed mightily in her power over Octavia's husband. She set up a throne of silver with golden chairs in the market-place, and here, she and Antony being publicly enthroned, they placed at their feet Cæsarion, who was said to be Julius Cæsar's son, and Antony and Cleopatra's children, Alexander and Ptolemy. To Cleopatra, thus regally seated,

Antony gave the absolute queenship of Egypt; and he proclaimed her sons the kings of kings, giving them rich Eastern kingdoms for their portions.

Antony took care that this should not come to Octavia's ears, but it was soon broached to Cæsar himself, for he had eyes upon him, and his affairs came to him on the wind. It therefore happened that Cæsar took some bold steps for satisfaction of his personal ambition; for he broke with Pompey and destroyed him, and he put Lepidus in prison for fancied wrongs, thus freeing himself from two heavy clogs to his imperial progress. He was well aware that such acts would arouse Antony, and this was, indeed, partly what he desired, for he wanted to be single in Rome, and he felt that upon Antony's excesses in Egypt he could well found charges which would justify him with the Romans in bringing his fellow-triumvir to account.

When Antony heard what had happened he was incensed against Cæsar, who, he told Octavia, had made his will and read it publicly to gain credit with the people; and had spoken scantily of him, and when he could not avoid paying him terms of honour, he had done it but coldly and sickly. Octavia was most unhappy at this turn of affairs, for she said if she prayed for blessings on her husband she was but calling down harm upon her brother. Antony told her that if he lost his honour he lost himself, and better he were not hers at all than hers and branchless.

But, as she requested it, he consented that she should be go-between, while in the mean time he would raise the preparation of a war. He bid her make haste, provide her going, choose her own company, and command what cost her heart had mind to.

She set out at once, but with a meagre attendance, and in a brief time arrived in Rome, where Cæsar and his friends were seated in council upon Antony's unlawful courses. "Hail, Cæsar! Hail, most dear Cæsar!" she cried, as she entered; and Cæsar, astonished to see her there, said lovingly, "That ever I should call thee castaway!" She replied that there was no cause to do so; but he questioned why she had stolen upon him thus, who should have an army for an usher and the neighs of horse to tell of her approach long ere she appeared. The trees by the wayside, he said, should have borne men, and expectation fainted longing for what it had not. "But," he continued, the more to mark Antony's fault, "you are come a market-maid to Rome, and have prevented the ostentation of our love, which left unshown is often left unloved." She truthfully said that she was not constrained to come thus, but did it of her own free will, having prayed her lord, Mark Antony, because of the intended war, that she might return to Rome. Cæsar said that Antony was glad of her coming, because her absence removed a check upon his lust. This Octavia was quick to deny, whereupon Cæsar

told her of Antony's doings in Egypt, and how, by that very time, Cleopatra having nodded him to her, he had travelled thither again, and that he and she were then levying the kings of all the East for the coming war. "Ah me, most wretched, that have my heart parted betwixt two friends that do afflict each other!" she moaned; but Cæsar gave her a brotherly welcome to Rome, bidding her cheer her heart and let determined things to destiny hold, unbewailed, their way.

Cæsar was quick with his warlike preparations, and even before Antony knew that he had set sail from Italy his navy had penetrated far into the Mediterranean and taken the city of Toryne. Antony was touched to envy by this surprising achievement, and to show his own prowess and equipment in ships he vowed he would fight with Cæsar by sea instead of land, as had been determined. This, Canidius, a prudent leader, much opposed; but Antony gave him little heed, having fixed his mind upon a show of his strength by sea so that Cæsar might know him to be his equal in martial manœuvres. Enobarbus also tried to dissuade his master, saying that their ships were not well manned, their mariners muleteers, reapers, and people suddenly pressed into the service, while Cæsar's fleet was manned by those that often had fought against Pompey. But Antony cried only, "By sea, by sea!" and would listen to no argument. Cleopatra, ever his bad angel, encouraged him in his imprudent course by offer-

ing her sixty sails; and this confirmed the headstrong soldier. He started for his ships, bidding Canidius, at the same time, to hold his nineteen legions and twelve thousand horse by land.

Cæsar, on his part, was wise enough to keep to his ships, where he knew his greatest strength lay; and he commanded his leaders not to strike by land, but to remain whole till they had done their utmost by sea.

When, therefore, these two forces met in the Mediterranean, it was not long before the superiority of Cæsar's navy was evident. But even had this not been the case, Antony was doomed to defeat, for in the midst of the fight, when the advantage seemed about equal, Cleopatra, with her sixty ships, hoisted sails and fled; and, she once being in flight, Antony, the noble ruin of her magic, clapped on his sea-wing and shamefully followed her. Experience, manhood, and honour, all were violated, and the hero of Philippi yielded up his last hope of conquest; for, seeing his flight, Canidius began to fail in his allegiance and darkly plotted to carry his legions over to Cæsar.

When Antony came ashore he stormed against his own cowardice, saying the land bid him tread no more on it, for it was ashamed to bear him; and in his self-reproach he begged his friends to take his ship laden with gold and divide it among them and make their peace with Cæsar. This the loyal band refused to do; but as he was pleading with them to leave him, Cleopatra, with her women,

Charmian and Iras, came in, and Eros, a soldier, said, "Most noble sir, arise; the queen approaches." Antony was deep in thought upon his most unnoble swerving, and he did not heed the words. Again Eros spoke. Then Antony looked upon Cleopatra with deep reproach. "O whither hast thou led me, Egypt?" he said. "See how I convey my shame out of thine eyes by looking back on what I have left behind, destroyed in dishonour." She asked forgiveness, and said she little thought he would have followed when her ships fled. But he told her she knew too well that his heart was tied to her rudder by the strings. "O, my pardon," she humbly said. And, the more to pain her, he told how he must send humble treaties to young Cæsar and dodge and palter to him in the shifts of lowness.

Cleopatra began to weep at his remorse, and this turned the current of his thoughts away from grief. "Fall not a tear," he cried, with his old ardour; "one of them rates all that is won and lost." Then, with an impetuous caress, he bid her give him a kiss, for even that repaid him.

Antony had sent his schoolmaster, Euphronius, to treat with Cæsar; and this envoy now came back, saying the young general had declared that Cleopatra should have courtesy if she would yield up Mark Antony.

Turning to the queen, Antony said, "Send this grizzled head to the boy Cæsar and he will fill thy wishes to the brim with principalities." Cleo-

patra asked, "That head, my lord?" And Antony, seeing her fondness, bid the messenger go back to Cæsar again. "Tell him he wears the rose of youth upon him. I dare him to lay his gay caparisons apart and answer me sword against sword, ourselves alone." And he led the schoolmaster apart that he might write the challenge out ere he sent it.

In the mean time a messenger from Cæsar, named Thyreus, whom that general had ordered to go to Cleopatra and win her from Antony with soft words and rich promises, came into the queen's presence, and made his suit in Cæsar's name, saying the conqueror knew that she embraced Antony not as she did love him, but as she feared him; and the scars upon her honour he therefore pitied as constrained blemishes, not as deserved ones. Cleopatra listened with willing ears and uttered encouraging exclamations as the messenger proceeded, and, upon this last speech, she said, "Cæsar is a god and knows what is most right. Mine honour was not yielded, but conquered merely." Then this wily pleader for his master asked if he should say to Cæsar what the queen desired of him, for the conqueror partly begged to be desired to give, and he told her that it would warm Cæsar's spirits to hear that she had left Antony and put herself under his protection. Cleopatra was charmed with his addresses, and asked his name, which he modestly gave; then she sent a message of humble allegiance to great Cæsar,

and Thyreus begged grace to lay his duty on her hand, and he bent low and kissed her royal fingers.

At that moment Antony and Enobarbus entered the chamber, and seeing this act of gallantry, the Roman general exclaimed, "Favours, by Jove that thunders!" In jealous rage he asked the fellow his name. Thyreus told him, "One that but performed the bidding of the fullest man and worthiest to have command obeyed." Whereupon Antony, in great anger, called his attendants and ordered them to take hence the Jack and whip him. Thyreus protested vehemently, but he was carried away by force. Then Antony's jealousy burst upon Cleopatra, whom he charged with all unfaithfulness to him and to all else. "I found you as a morsel cold upon dead Cæsar's trencher," he said. "Nay, you were a fragment of Pompey's, beside what hotter hours unregistered in vulgar fame you have luxuriously picked out." Cleopatra exclaimed against his cruelty, and asked wherefore was his rage. Antony repeated his scorn of one who would thus let a knave be familiar with her hand, the kingly seal and plighter of high hearts. As he stormed on thus the servants came back with Thyreus, whom they had, they said, soundly whipped. "Get thee back to Cæsar," said Antony, "and tell him thy entertainment." And when the injured messenger had departed, he turned again to Cleopatra, muttering, "To flatter Cæsar would you mingle eyes

with one that ties his points?" She charged him with undervaluing her, and so wrought upon his ruffled temper with her womanly spells and magic caresses that he presently grew calm. Then he vowed that he would encounter Cæsar with his force by land, for he and his sword should yet earn their chronicler, and he said he would be treble-sinewed, hearted, and breathed, and without mercy send to darkness all that stopped him. Then, as she coaxed him into a more pliant and loving humour with words of admiration, he said, at last, in his old mood, "Come, let's have one other gaudy night. Call to me my sad captains; fill our bowls once more; let's mock the midnight bell." But Enobarbus, who stood by, saw only a cruel fate in all this gaiety. He said it was a diminution in his master's brain which thus restored his heart, for when valour preys on reason it eats the sword it fights with; therefore this loyal soldier saw at last that he must seek some way to leave his reckless master.

When Cæsar received Antony's challenge to single combat he was indignant to be treated as a boy, and it wounded him sorely to learn that his messenger had been whipped. "Let the old ruffian know I have many other ways to die," quoth he; and he ordered that his army should be prepared on the morrow to fight its last of many battles. Antony, on his side, was wrought up to a fiercer temper than ever upon learning of Cæsar's contempt for his challenge, and he too put forth

his commands for a battle the next day, saying he would fight both by sea and land.

But as Antony set out in the morning with high hopes and matchless courage, he was met by the heavy news that Enobarbus had gone over to the enemy. Antony valued this soldier much, and it was a cruel wound to find him a deserter at this crisis; but he felt that his own evil fortunes had corrupted even this faithful friend, and he forgave him nobly by sending after him all the treasure that belonged to him. This melted the heart of the brave soldier, and he found too late that he had made a mistake, for Cæsar treated him with but little consideration. He felt that he had rather die than go into the battle against his beloved leader, and, wandering forth in the night, his heart was broken with shame and remorse, and he died before the fight began.

When, the next morning, the forces of Cæsar and Antony met in deadly combat, the battle waged long and fiercely; but at last Antony's army won the day and drove the foe to his camp. Then, in high exultation the valiant Antony, with all his old magnificence, marched back to Alexandria and greeted Cleopatra like a victorious emperor. "To-morrow," quoth he, "before the sun shall see us, we'll spill his blood that has to-day escaped." He thanked all his soldiers; and so lifted up was he with his success that he took Cleopatra to his iron arms, crying, "O thou day o' the world, leap thou, attire and all, through proof of harness to my heart!"

But the next day Cæsar contrived that the fight should be waged by sea, and here, as before, Cæsar prevailed; for the Egyptian augurs found that swallows had built in Cleopatra's sails, and they looked grimly and alarmed the sailors, who, when they were brought into the midst of the battle, failed of courage, and again deserted the Roman fleet at a fatal moment.

When Antony saw this, from a hill overlooking the sea, he was aroused to a storm of anger against the Egyptian queen, whom he accused of selling him to the novice, Cæsar. "Betrayed I am," he cried. "This false soul of Egypt, like a right gypsy, hath beguiled me to the very heart of loss;" and as Cleopatra at that moment came up to him, he retreated from her, saying, "Ah, thou spell! Avaunt!" "Why is my lord enraged against his love?" she asked, piteously; but he vouchsafed no answer, merely bidding her vanish, or he would give her her deserving and blemish Cæsar's triumph. "Let him take thee, and hoist thee up to the shouting plebeians of Rome," he raved on; "follow his chariot like the greatest spot of all thy sex, and let Octavia plough thy visage up with her prepared nails!" With each sentence he grew more threatening, and at last the queen retreated to her women, crying for their help, and saying Antony was as mad as Telamon for his shield. Charmian then led the way to the Monument, a stronghold of the palace, and there Cleopatra and her women locked themselves up.

When they were thus safely housed, the queen sent Mardian to Antony, bidding him say that she had slain herself, and that the last word she spoke was Antony. She thus thought to stem the torrent of his rage, and when he was calmer, to win back his love.

By this time Antony had returned to the palace at Alexandria, and bringing Eros, his servant, with him, he commanded the faithful fellow, who had previously sworn to do the deed, to take his life; for he said he was such a body as the clouds which take fantastic shapes, black vesper's pageants, now changing from a bear or lion to a towered citadel or blue promontory with trees upon it, that nod unto the world and mock our eyes with air. "Here, I am Antony, yet cannot hold this visible shape," quoth he. "I made these wars for Egypt; and the queen, whose heart I thought I had, for she had mine, packed cards with Cæsar, and false played my glory unto an enemy's triumph." Then as Eros began to weep, he bid him dry his eyes, for, he said, there were still left themselves to end themselves.

But now Mardian arrived, and, hearing what Antony charged against Cleopatra, he made answer that his mistress was not to blame, for she loved Antony, and her fortunes in all things mingled with his. "Hence, saucy eunuch; peace," exclaimed the Roman general; "she hath betrayed me, and shall die the death." Mardian, with show of grief, said what Antony

would do was already done unto his hand, and he told him pathetically, as he had been bid, that the last word the queen spoke was, Antony! "Unarm, Eros," said the general, sadly; "the long day's task is done, and we must sleep." Then he sent Mardian and Eros away, and gave himself up to grief, and at the last he would have slain himself, crying, "I come, my queen; stay for me: where souls do couch on flowers, we'll hand in hand, and with our sprightly port make the ghosts gaze." But his purpose failed, and he called Eros in to help him: for he that with his sword had quartered the world, and over green Neptune's back made cities with his ships, began to lack the courage of a woman. Eros drew back from such an office, but Antony coaxed him on to fulfil his oath by asking if he would like to be gaped at by the mob of great Rome in Cæsar's triumph.

At last, after much persuasion, the loyal knave said, "Turn from me then that noble countenance;" and this Antony did, bidding him at the same time to strike. Eros delayed an instant that he might say farewell, and when this was done, and Antony had again turned from him for the thrust, he cried, "Farewell, great chief. Shall I strike now?" "Now, Eros," said Antony, firmly. "Why, there, then," cried Eros. "Thus do I escape the sorrow of Antony's death;" and instead of striking his master, the devoted soldier himself fell upon his sword.

Antony, being thus taught a lesson in bravery,

did not delay to run upon his own sword; but the wound he gave himself was not fatal, and he rolled upon the floor in pain, calling for the guard that they might despatch him, for he groaned that he had done his work ill. Upon hearing his master's voice Dercetas, with some of the guard, rushed in, but so terrified were they that none would help Antony to die; yet Dercetas cruelly plucked the sword from the general's wound that he might gain credit by showing it to Cæsar.

Then came in Diomedes, a servant of the queen, whom Antony also begged to draw his sword and give him strokes sufficing for death. This the slave avoided doing, and he said that his mistress had a prophetic fear of what had now come to pass, for when she saw that Antony suspected her of going over to Cæsar, she had sent him word that she was dead, but fearing since how it might work, she now revealed the truth.

Antony bid Diomedes call his guard, and when they came in he commanded them to bear him to the Monument where Cleopatra was, and sadly he added, "'Tis the last service that I shall command you." The carriers, wailing out their grief, took up their leader with all tenderness, and presently brought him before the Monument, where, beholding him, the queen burst forth into woful cries. "O sun, burn the great sphere thou movest in! Darkling stand the varying shore o' the world! O, Antony! Antony! Antony!" and she called to her women and to the friends below the window of the

Monument for help to lift the wounded warrior up to her. "Peace," said Antony, feebly; and then with a great heart-breaking groan he murmured, "I am dying, Egypt, dying;" but he begged death to stay awhile until, of many thousand kisses, he laid the poor last upon her lips. Cleopatra called to him that she dared not come down lest she be taken by Cæsar's soldiers, and again she cried for help and bid all assist to draw Antony up to the window. "O quick, I am gone," he panted; and, with a great united effort, they took him in their arms and lifted him into the Monument, where the queen welcomed him with a thousand pitiful caresses. He asked for some wine, and desired to speak a little. She tried to prevent him, but he prayed her to seek her honour and safety of Cæsar. "They do not go together," she said. "Gentle, hear me," he pleaded. "Trust none of those about Cæsar but Proculeius." When she had told him that she would trust only her resolution and her hands, he bid her neither lament nor sorrow at the miserable change now at an end, but to please her thoughts in feeding them with his former fortunes wherein he lived, the greatest prince of the world, the noblest, who did not now basely die nor cowardly put off his helmet to his countryman. Then, with a great agony, he gave up his soul.

Cleopatra's heart was broken with grief, for she felt miserably alone without her Roman soldier, and knew not where to turn for protection. But still queenly in her trouble, she cheered her weeping

women and hailed the guard below with words of courage, saying, "We'll bury him; and then what's brave, what's noble, let us do after the high Roman fashion, and make death proud to take us."

Dercetas went upon his shameful errand straightway to Cæsar, but when he told the conqueror of Antony's death and showed him his sword, Cæsar ignored the messenger in very grief to hear the message. "The breaking of so great a thing should make a greater crack," he said. "The round world should have shook lions into civil streets and citizens to their dens." Dercetas told the manner of Antony's death, and Cæsar was deeply moved to hear it; but he strove to quiet his remorse by speaking to his friends of Antony's faults, yet his one-time love and admiration for the great Roman welled up into his eyes, and he broke off abruptly.

Hereupon a messenger from Cleopatra came into the camp saying the queen, his mistress, confined in her Monument, desired instruction of Cæsar's intentions towards her, that she might prepare herself to do his will. Cæsar bid her have good heart, and she should soon know how honourably and kindly he meant to act towards her; for, he told the messenger, that Cæsar could not live to be ungentle. The slave humbly saluted the conqueror and sped back to his mistress. Cæsar then sent Proculeius to Cleopatra to say that he intended her no shame; and he commanded this officer to give her what comforts she desired lest in her greatness,

by some fatal stroke, she should defeat him of his purpose; for, he said, to take her alive to Rome would be an eternal triumph.

When Proculeius approached the gates of the Monument and gave the queen Cæsar's greeting, she asked him his name; and when she learned it, she was well disposed towards the soldier, for it was of him that Antony had well spoken. She told him that if his master would have a queen for his beggar, majesty, to keep decorum, must beg for no less than a kingdom, and that if he pleased to give her conquered Egypt for her son, she would kneel to him with thanks.

Proculeius prayed her to be of good cheer, for she had fallen into princely hands; and, after bandying backward and forward many gracious messages, the queen said she would gladly look Cæsar in the face. Proculeius started to convey this wish to his master, when Gallus, who accompanied him, secretly pointed out how easily the queen might be surprised in her stronghold. They then procured ladders, and, placing them against a window, ascended to where Cleopatra was. Once within, they came behind the queen and her attendants, and, having made sure of them, they unbarred and opened the gates below. Thus, without bloodshed, the stronghold was taken, and Proculeius and some of his guard kept watch till Cæsar came.

The queen was dismayed with affright and anger so to be entrapped, and she drew her dagger and would have slain herself on the instant

had not Proculeius promptly disarmed her. She vowed, then, that she would eat no meat; nor would she drink, nor sleep, but would ruin that mortal house that hemmed her in, do Cæsar what he could. Rather than be hoisted up to the shouting varletry in Cæsar's triumph she said she would make her country's high pyramids her gibbet, and be hung in chains.

Upon this Dolabella, another of Cæsar's officers, came up and replaced Proculeius by his master's orders; and this Dolabella, though a mighty soldier, had a soft heart, for he revealed Cæsar's purposes to the queen, telling her that what she feared was true, for the conqueror meant to lead her in triumph through Rome.

But now Cæsar himself approached the Monument with his royal train, and when he was entered he asked, "Which is the queen of Egypt?" Cleopatra knelt before him; but he bid her arise, saying she should not kneel; yet he told her imperiously that if she sought, by taking Antony's course, to force him to do her a cruelty, she would bereave herself of his good purposes and put her children to destruction. Having uttered this threat, he said he would take his leave; and she answered that he might through all the world, for it was his, and she and hers, his 'scutcheons and signs of conquest, would hang in what place he pleased. She then offered him an account of the money, plate, and jewels she was possessed of, saying it was valued exactly, for only petty things were omitted; and

Seleucus, her treasurer, being summoned, she bid him say, upon his peril, that she had reserved nothing to herself. "Madam," said the honest treasurer, "I had rather seal my lips, than, to my peril, speak what is not." The queen was incensed at this, and challenged him to reveal what she had kept back. He said it was enough to purchase what she had made known. Cæsar pitied her, a royal queen, thus put to shame, and said he approved her wisdom in the deed; but she was sore wounded thus to be robbed of her majesty, and besought the conqueror to behold how pomp was served. Then she broke forth in rage against the ingrate treasurer. "Say, good Cæsar," quoth she, "that I have reserved some lady trifles, and say I have kept some nobler token apart for Livia and Octavia, to induce their mediation, must I be betrayed by one that I have bred?" and pointing an imperious finger to the door, she commanded the treasurer to go hence in shame.

Cæsar assured her that all she had should be hers to bestow at her pleasure, and bidding her to fear nothing, he made his adieu, and went forth with all his train.

Cleopatra instantly called Charmian to her side and whispered in her ear some directions, which the attendant went forth to fulfil. After a brief absence Charmian returned, and the queen then bid her women go fetch her best attires, for she would array herself as when she sailed for Cydnus of old to meet Mark Antony. "Now, noble Char-

mian, we'll despatch indeed," she exclaimed; "and when thou hast done this errand I'll give thee leave to play till doomsday."

But there was at this moment a noise without-doors, and a guard entered, saying that there was a rural fellow at the gate who would not be denied the queen's presence, for he brought her a basket of figs. Cleopatra commanded the guard to admit him, and presently a talkative clown came in to her, bearing a basket. She asked him if he had the pretty worm of the Nile that kills and gives no pain; and, with many precautions against its deadly bite, he told her he had, and showed her where it lay among the fig-leaves.

When the queen had received the little asp and had dismissed the rustic who brought it, she began to put on her regal robes and crown, for she said she had immortal longings in her. "Methinks I hear Antony call; I see him rouse himself to praise my noble act; I hear him mock the luck of Cæsar;" then with a great outburst of love she cried, "Husband, I come!" and she wished that her courage might prove her title to call him by that name. "I am fire and air," she said; "my other elements I give to baser life;" then, tenderly kissing her women and with a long farewell, she applied the asp to her breast, bidding it with its sharp teeth untie the intricate knot of life. She passed softly into a state like waking-sleep, and, placing another asp upon her arm, fell across her bed in a dying swoon.

The guard suspecting that all was not right, and fearing that Cæsar's victim might slip from their grasp, now rushed in; but Charmian bid them speak softly and wake her not. She also, now, took up one of the asps, and before they could prevent her applied it to her arm; so that when at last one of the guard had called in Dolabella, both queen and maid were dead. "Cæsar, thy thoughts have proven true," mused Dolabella. "Thou, thyself, art coming to see performed the dreaded act which thou so sought'st to hinder." And, on the very heels of his officer, the conqueror arrived with a host of attendants, who thronged into the Monument to behold the beautiful queen dead. "Bravest at the last," said Cæsar, provoked to admiration at this proof of her courage. "She foresaw our purposes, and, being royal, took her own way."

He asked the manner of their deaths, for he did not see them bleed, and after diligent search one of the guard discovered an aspic's trail, such as this little snake leaves on the caves of the Nile, upon the fig-leaves, whereat Cæsar said it was most probable that so the queen and Charmian had died, for Cleopatra's physician had told him that she pursued infinite conclusions of easy ways to die.

He commanded the attendants to take up the dead queen's bed and bear her from the Monument, for she should be buried by her Antony; and he said truly, that no grave upon the earth

might clip within it a pair so famous. "Such high events as these strike those that make them," quoth he; "and their story is no less in pity than his glory which brought them to be lamented." Then he ordered that his army should attend the funeral, and afterwards embark for Rome, there to make triumph for the victories won in Egypt.

THE END.

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Deacidified using the Bookkeeper process.
Neutralizing agent: Magnesium Oxide
Treatment Date: Feb. 2009

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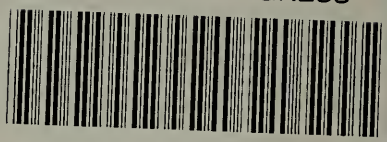
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